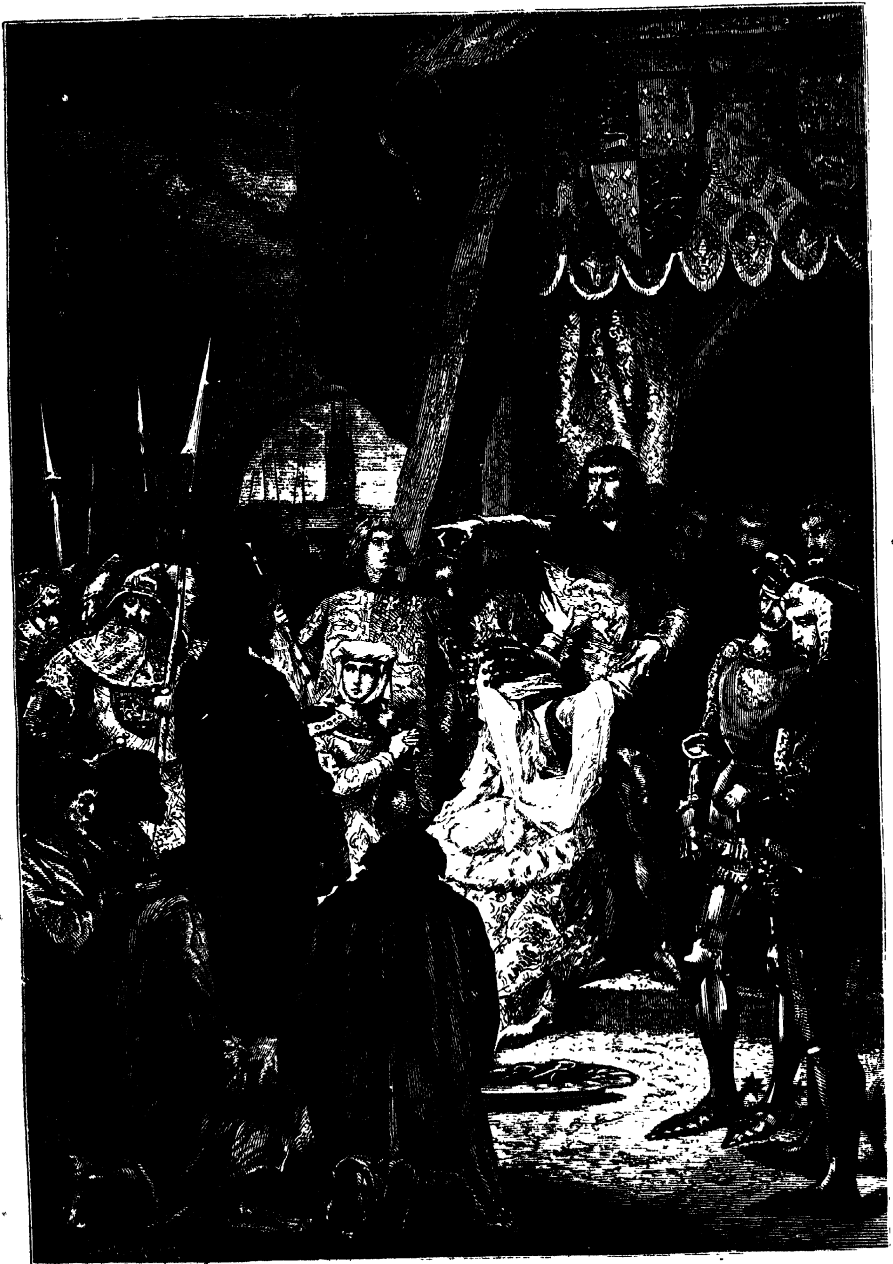
THE

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

RELATED FOR THE RISING GENERATION.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.



QUEEN PHILIPPA HAD THROWN HERSELF ON HER KNEES.

See page 313.

THE HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND
FROM
THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

RELATED FOR THE RISING GENERATION BY
M. GUIZOT,

AND EDITED BY
MADAME DE WITT, NÉE GUIZOT.

TRANSLATED BY MOY THOMAS.

WITH ALL THE FRENCH ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOLUME THE FIRST.



LONDON:
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PREFACE.

"The History of France," related to his grandchildren by M. Guizot, is now universally known. It has supplied a want which every one must have felt; it has been welcome both to children and to parents. Our national history enjoyed one indisputable privilege: it had everywhere the right to the first place. But after the "History of France," my father had related for the benefit of his grandchildren the "History of England." He had adopted a plan slightly different from that which he had followed in his previous narratives. He felt that in this case the knowledge which would enable the reader to supply any hiatus is less extended; he was, in consequence, careful to preserve the regular and chronological sequence of events. I have collected these lessons as I collected those of "The History of France." My father foresaw that he would not himself make use of the notes which I preserved. He therefore requested me to edit them, and he took a pleasure in reperusing my work. I have thus written this "History of England," step by step, as he related, and in great part revised it; and I now publish it in accordance with his desire, and in the hope of enabling others to share in the useful instruction which we all derived from it, both parents and children. The French have often been charged with ignorance of the history of foreign nations. It is time to remove that reproach. For

us the "History of England" is important and interesting above all others. In peaceful times and in times of war it is everywhere connected with our own by a national bond, which all the causes of dissension have not been able to destroy. In studying the History of England we study again the History of France; and we may draw from it useful lessons for the service and the welfare of that country whose trials and sorrows have rendered her a thousand times dearer to us.

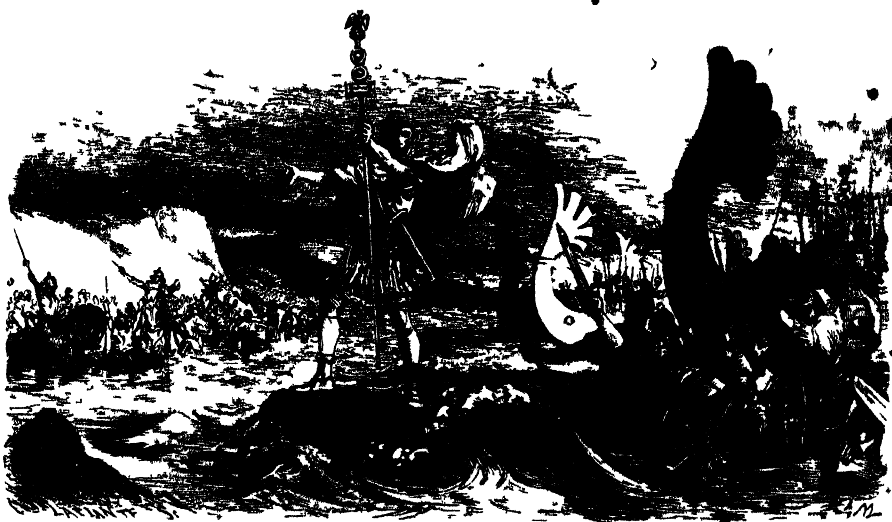
GUIZOT DE WITT.

PARIS, *March 21st*, 1876.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

In this Edition of Guizot's "History of England" are all the Illustrations contained in the French Edition; and as in some instances the fine drawings by M. de Neuville made for Guizot's "History of France" illustrate scenes in English History, a few have been introduced to further embellish this Edition of the latter.



CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT POPULATIONS OF BRITAIN.—ROMAN DOMINION 55 B C TO 411 A.D.

THE earliest periods of English History are obscure, and even the origin of its inhabitants is still a subject of discussion. The first authentic information which we possess with regard to them is derived from their conqueror. Julius Cæsar remarked their resemblance to the Gauls, and modern researches have confirmed his testimony. Every thing seems to show that the inhabitants of Britain were Celts, or Gaels, a name which the population of the highlands of Scotland retain to this day. On the Southern Coasts, an invasion of Cimrys, or Belgians, appears to have mingled with the Celtic population and to have brought with it some elements of civilization. Long before the advent of Cæsar, the Phœnicians and Greeks established at Marseilles, had entered into relations of commerce with the Scilly Isles, which they called the Cassiterides, and also with the extremity of the County of Cornwall, where the tin-mines were situated.

Pytheas, who lived at Marseilles at the commencement of the Fourth Century B.C., has related his voyage along the coast of Britain; but it is with the invasion of the Romans that the history of England commences. It is here that we penetrate for the first time into those islands which, though separated from the rest of the world, sent to the Gauls, who were struggling for their independence, succour, which furnished Cæsar with a pretext for the attempt to conquer them. After his fourth campaign in Gaul, about the year 55 B.C., the great Roman general set sail on the 26th of August for Britain. He had brought with him the infantry of two legions,—about twelve thousand men, and he disembarked near the point where the town of Deal is now situated. The Britons had gathered in a mass upon the shore. A great number were on horseback, urging their horses into the waves, and insulting and defying the foreigners. They were almost entirely naked, having cast off the clothing of skins with which they were ordinarily covered, in order to prepare for the combat. Their war chariots were driven rapidly along the shore. For a moment the Roman soldiers hesitated, troubled by the unaccustomed sight, perhaps from a dread of offending the unknown gods of people celebrated among their Gaulish brethren for the devotion with which they surrounded the Druidical faith. The standard-bearer of the tenth legion was the first to precipitate himself into the sea. "Follow me, my fellow-soldiers," said he, "unless you will give up your eagle to the enemy. I at least will do my duty to the Republic and to our general." His comrades followed his example, and the savage inhabitants of Britain retired in disorder, driven back, in spite of their bravery, after a short engagement.

On the morrow, ambassadors from the Britons came to solicit peace. At the first rumour of the projected invasion they had sent emissaries into Gaul to offer their submission to the Romans, in the hope of turning them from their enterprise. Cæsar had listened to them with kindness and had had them conducted by his own envoy Comius, king of the Belgian

Atrebates; but he did not relinquish his intentions, and the Britons in their irritation had put the delegate of Cæsar in irons. This was the first matter with which the conqueror reproached them, at the same time demanding hostages for their future good behaviour. Some hostages were immediately given. The British chiefs asked for time to send others, and Cæsar entered into separate negotiations with the chiefs who came one after the other to treat with the conqueror.

During these negotiations the sea rendered aid to the Britons. Great part of the Roman fleet was destroyed. The barbarians perceived their advantage and were dilatory in sending the hostages. Meanwhile Cæsar had promptly set his soldiers to the task of repairing the vessels, and making requisitions upon the Gauls for the materials which were required. The vessels were beginning to be in a state to take the sea when the seventh legion, detached on a foraging expedition in the country, was surprised in the only field of grain then standing, by a number of Britons who were lying in ambush concealed by the long stalks of the corn. Horsemen and war chariots issued forth from the surrounding forests. The Romans ran the risk of being crushed, when Cæsar came to their assistance with the remainder of his forces, and defeated the barbarians, who sued for peace. The equinox was approaching. The general did not even wait for the hostages, but set sail for Gaul in the middle of September, sending at the same time news to Rome which induced the Senate to decree twenty days of public thanksgivings to the Immortal Gods. In his *Commentaries*, however, Cæsar modestly describes this first campaign in Britain as a reconnoitring expedition. He cherished the design of returning thither later.

Accordingly in the following year (54 B.C.), Cæsar embarked at the same point upon the coast of Gaul, in order to land at the same spot, though with very different forces. He carried with him the infantry of five legions (about thirty thousand men) and two thousand cavalry. Eight hundred transport vessels covered the sea.

From the summits of their cliffs the Britons had perceived this formidable expedition, and had sought refuge in the vast forests which cover their shores. Cæsar marched forward to drive them back into their retreats, when a violent tempest destroyed forty of his ships and drove a great number ashore. The first care of the conqueror was to protect his fleet against the fury of the sea and the hostility of the islanders. He caused all his vessels to be hauled ashore, in order to surround them afterwards by a strong intrenchment. His largest galleys were diminutive in comparison with our vessels of war. His transport ships were hardly more than barges. The Roman soldiers laboured without intermission ten days and ten nights before they had rendered their fleet secure.

They then resumed their march against the Britons, whose army was still increasing. All the chiefs had united their forces under the orders of a commander-in-chief, Cassivelanus, king of the Cassii, renowned for his bravery and skill. The Britons avoided a general engagement. Assailing the Romans incessantly with their cavalry and their war-chariots, which they conducted with the ease of habit even along the edge of precipices, they retired again into the forests from the moment that the advantage was no longer on their side. But this barbarian intrepidity was not accompanied by experience. Cæsar's cavalry, supported by three legions, having scoured the country in quest of forage, the enemy had remained concealed all day, when suddenly they issued in a mass from the neighbouring forests and swept down upon the Romans who were scattered about the country. Already the Britons imagined themselves victors; but the well-disciplined Roman detachments formed again as if by enchantment, the horsemen rallied, and the Britons, enclosed in a formidable circle, sustained losses so great that on the morrow the allies of Cassivelanus nearly all deserted him and returned into their territories, leaving him to face the Romans unsupported. The king in his turn fell back upon his kingdom, which was situated on the left bank of the Thames.

In their pursuit the Romans had traversed the fertile country

which now forms the counties of Kent and Surrey, while this skirmishing species of warfare continued, often with results favourable to the Britons. But the fatal want of union common to barbarous tribes lent aid to the Romans. Cassivelanus was detested by his neighbours the Trinobantes, who sent ambassadors to Cæsar, asking the restoration of their king Mandubratius, a fugitive in Gaul, where he had implored the protection of the Romans against this same Cassivelanus, who had conquered and put to death the father of his rival. On this condition the Trinobantes offered their submission. Some other tribes followed their example. These seceders acquainted the Romans with the road to Cassivelanus's capital situated on the environs of the spot now occupied by the town of St. Alban's. This was a collection of huts reminding beholders of the dwellings of the Gauls. They rested on a foundation made of stones, from which arose the walls composed of timber, earth, and reeds, and surmounted by a conical roof which served at once to admit daylight and to allow smoke to escape through a hole in the top. Fens and woods surrounded by a ditch and earthworks protected this primitive capital, which soon fell into the hands of the Romans.

Cassivelanus had only one hope left. He had given orders to the four chiefs who had the command in Kent to attack the Roman vessels. They obeyed, but the detachment charged with the protection of the fleet was on its guard. The Britons were repulsed. Cassivelanus, beaten and discouraged, humbled himself so far as to sue for peace. Nevertheless when Cæsar at the commencement of September retired once more to Gaul, he left in Britain neither a soldier nor a fortress. The second campaign, longer and more fortunate than the first, had not produced any greater results.

Ninety-six years elapsed: the Roman Republic had become the Roman Empire; but the Britons had been troubled by no new invasion. The Belgian population of the sea-coast had continued to cultivate their fields, to which they already knew how to apply marl for manure. They had woven in peace their

long brogues, or chequered breeches, their square mantles, and their tunics. The Celts, more savage, had seen their flocks multiply around them. Even this, the only kind of wealth among barbarous tribes, did not exist in the northern part of Britain. The rude inhabitants of Scotland depended only on the products of the chase, and found a shelter for their almost naked state in the hollow of rocks or in the obscurity of caverns; but no invader had come to trouble their wild liberty up to the day when the Emperor Claudius, in the year 45 of the Christian Era, conceived the project of marching in the footsteps of Cæsar and subduing the savage land of Britain. One of the most experienced of his generals, Aulus Plautius, sent forward with a force of fifty thousand men, obtained at first some successes notwithstanding the resistance of the chief of the Silures, Caractacus. When the Emperor arrived, the capital of this people was captured, and several tribes had submitted almost without a struggle. Claudius returned to Rome to enjoy there the honours of an easy triumph.

Thirty battles fought by Aulus Plautius were insufficient to reduce Caractacus. Ostorius Scapula was the first to succeed in establishing on the Severn a line of forts separating from the rest of the island the country, now become Roman, which comprised nearly all the Southern tribes. The Britons, who appeared to be subdued, were disarmed. But a new insurrection soon broke forth. The Iceni, who occupied the country now known as the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, were the first to rise. The Cangi followed their example; and in order to reduce them the Prætor was compelled to pursue them as far as to within one day's march of the sea which separates England from Ireland. From the territory of the Brigantes, which embraced a portion of the present counties of Lancashire and York, Ostorius hastened to invade the Silures, who inhabited the southern portion of Wales, and who were always the most indomitable opponents of a foreign domination. "Behold the day which is to decide the fate of Britain!" exclaimed Caractacus at the sight of the Romans. "To-day begins the era either of liberty or eternal slavery. Remember that your ancestors were



CARACTACUS AND HIS WIFE BEFORE CLAUDIUS AND AGRIPPINA.

able to drive back the great Cæsar, and to save their liberty, their life, and their honour!" He spoke in vain. The naked breasts and bare heads of the Britons could not resist the broad swords of the Roman soldiers. The massacre was horrible. The wife and the daughter of Caractacus were captured, but the chief himself had disappeared. Hoping to renew the struggle, he had taken refuge with his mother-in-law, Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes. She delivered him up to the Romans. Caractacus was sent to Rome with his family. "How can men who possess such palaces make such efforts to conquer our miserable hovels?" exclaimed the British hero, while traversing the streets of Rome. He appeared before the tribunal of the emperor. Agrippina was there by the side of her husband. The wife of Caractacus threw herself at her feet, imploring her pity; but the conquered chief asked for nothing, and exhibited no sign of fear. This greatness in defeat penetrated to the heart and to the sluggish mind of Claudius. He gave the order to set the captives free. Tradition states that he even restored to his prisoner a portion of his territory, but Tacitus does not mention this; he leaves the story of the vanquished chief at the point where the fetters fall from his hands.

For a moment Nero, who had become emperor, thought of abandoning the conquest of Britain, so difficult to secure. It was not until the year 59 A.D. that Paulinus Suetonius, at that time prætor, resolved to crush the resistance of the Britons in their innermost retreat. The island of Mona (now Anglesey) was consecrated to the Druid worship; the priests had nearly all taken refuge there, and there the defeated chiefs found an asylum. Religion even then exercised a considerable power over the minds of the inhabitants of Britain. In no part were the Druids more numerous and powerful; nowhere had they a greater number of disciples diligently occupied during long years in engraving upon their memory the regulations of their worship, the sacred maxims, the ancient poems, which the priests did not allow to be committed to writing. Great, therefore, was the

emotion in Britain when the Romans were seen to attack the holy isle.

On the shore a great crowd awaited the advance of the enemy, "savage and diversified" in appearance, says Tacitus. The armed men were assembled in a mass; the women, attired in sombre dress, running about with dishevelled hair, like furies



brandishing their torches; and the Druids were standing, clothed in their long white robes, as if about to sacrifice to their gods, their heads shaved, their beards long, their hands raised to heaven, while they pronounced the terrible maledictions of the Celtic races against the enemies of their people and their divinities. The Roman soldiers hesitated; their limbs seemed

paralyzed by fear, and they exposed themselves, without resisting, to the blows of their enemies. Their general urged them to advance. At length, each encouraging the other to despise the infuriated cries of a band of priests and women, they rushed upon the Britons, and precipitated them upon the stakes which they had prepared in order to sacrifice the Roman prisoners to their gods. A garrison was placed on the island; the sacred grove was cut down; and the fugitive Druids disappeared, to seek an asylum among the tribes which still offered a resistance.

The number of these tribes had increased in the absence of the prætor. The infamous treatment inflicted upon Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, and her children, by order of the procurator Catus, had aroused the indignation of her neighbours as well as of her own subjects. By secret intrigues the malcontents from all quarters were invited to strike a great blow for the recovery of their liberty. The colony of Camalodunum was first attacked and put to fire and sword. Suetonius hastened from the isle of Mona, and marched first towards London, already an important and populous city. Defence was impossible. The prætor withdrew the garrison to protect the rest of the provinces, and all the citizens who had not been able to retire under the shelter of the Roman eagles were massacred. The Roman colony of Verulam suffered the same fate. It is said that more than 70,000 Romans and their allies had already perished under the blows of the insurgents, when the two armies found themselves confronted. Queen Boadicea rode along the ranks of the Britons, clothed in a robe of various colours, with a golden zone around her waist. She reminded her countrymen that she was not the first woman who had led them to battle, since the custom of the country often called to the throne the widow of a sovereign, passing over his children. She spoke of the irreparable insults which she had undergone, of the misfortunes of the nation, and she exhorted the warriors to immolate all the Romans to Andrasta, the goddess of victory. The Romans remained motionless; they were awaiting the attack of the Britons.

The barbarians, excited by the glowing words of the queen, rushed upon the legions; the Romans bestirred themselves at length, and their broad swords opened for them a passage through the midst of the mass of Britons. The latter fell without flinching; but their enemy advanced to the line of chariots, and put to the sword women and children. It is said, though, no doubt, with the usual exaggeration of the time, that 80,000 Britons perished on that day. Boadicea, resolved not to survive her hopes of vengeance, poisoned herself upon the battle-field.

Successive prætors had failed to establish tranquillity in Britain, or to obtain the submission of the people, when Agricola, father-in-law of the celebrated historian Tacitus, arrived in his turn in this indomitable island. His brilliant exploits soon caused him to be respected; but, while pursuing year by year the course of his conquests, he endeavoured to found the Roman rule upon the most durable basis. In his hands the civil administration became milder; the Britons governed with justice, became gradually less estranged from their conquerors. A taste for luxury and Roman civilization began to distinguish the chiefs admitted to the prætorian court; the Roman toga took the place of the British mantle; buildings arose upon the model of the Roman constructions; children began to speak Latin; and at the same time the spirit of liberty and resistance diminished among the inhabitants of the south of Britain "The Britons willingly furnish recruits to our armies," wrote Tacitus; "they pay the taxes without murmuring, and they perform with zeal their duties towards the government, provided they have not to complain of oppression. When they are offended their resentment is prompt and violent; they may be conquered, but not tamed; they may be led to obedience, but not to servitude."

The military progress of the Roman general was no less important than his moral conquests. He had reached the Firth of Forth and the narrow isthmus which separates this river from the mouth of the Clyde. After every new victory he pro-

tected the subjected territory with forts. He even constructed a wall, the ruins of which, crossing the north of England from the Solway to the mouth of the Tyne, bear to this day his name. In the eighth and ninth year of his government he passed the line of the forts and penetrated into Scotland, the country of the Caledonians, savage tribes who had not yet beheld the Roman eagles. Scarcely had the conquerors invaded this new territory when the Caledonians, under the command of their chief, Galgacus, descended from the Grampian hills and fell upon the invader. On Ardoch Moor traces of the combat still exist, together with the lines of the Roman encampment. The struggle lasted all day, and the barbarians were defeated; but on the morrow at sunrise they had disappeared, and the Romans found themselves alone in the midst of a wild country. In their flight the Caledonians had set fire to their habitations, and with their own hands had slain their wives and children, to prevent their falling victims to the vengeance of the conqueror. The savage tribes had returned into their mountains, leaving, according to the chronicles, 10,000 dead upon the field of battle. Agricola made no effort to pursue them. Falling back towards the south, he despatched his vessels to make a voyage of exploration all round the island, the northern shores of which had not yet been visited. The mariners returned, reporting that no tongue of land connected Britain with the continent, that they had seen in the distance Thule (Iceland), enveloped in mists and eternal snow, and that the seas which they had traversed were of a sluggish kind, heavy under the oar, and never agitated by wind or storms. Agricola was recalled to Rome through the jealousy of the Emperor Domitian, but his wise government had appeased the passions of the Britons, and for thirty years afterwards the Roman annals contain no mention of British affairs—an evidence that peace reigned in the island.

An invasion of the Caledonians brought the Emperor Hadrian to Britain (120 A.D.). Having driven them back beyond the forts which connected the mouth of the Solway on the west

with that of the Tyne on the eastern coast, he caused to be raised behind this rampart an enormous wall, fortified by a wide fosse and provided with towers which received a garrison. This redoubt is still partly in existence, as is the wall of Antoninus, constructed some years later across the isthmus of the Forth, after a fresh invasion of the barbarians.

No rampart, however, could resist the warlike ardour of these savage populations; and the disorganization which had attacked the vast body of the Empire began to make itself felt among the legions established in Britain. The soldiers often murmured; the general, Albinus, after having refused the title of Cæsar from the hands of the Emperor Commodus, accepted it upon the offer of Septimius Severus, and, suddenly rejecting his allegiance, he was proclaimed emperor by his troops. Crossing immediately into Gaul to sustain his pretensions by force of arms, he was defeated near Revoux, and paid for his ambition by the loss of his head; but he had brought with him and had sacrificed the best of the troops in Britain, both Roman and native. The Caledonians took advantage of this opportunity to redouble their efforts, and the case became so grave that the emperor left Rome to oppose them (207 A.D.).

Septimius Severus was old and infirm, but his spirit was still unsubdued. When he entered into Caledonia with his son Caracalla, he brought in his train enormous armaments. His enemies were badly armed; they carried only the short sword and the target, which their descendants in the Highlands still employed during the wars of the last century. But they were skilled to take advantage of the natural defences of their country, and without being able to meet the Caledonians in a fixed battle the emperor had lost, it is said, 50,000 men before abandoning his expedition. He had carried the name and arms of the Romans so far that he had no intention of retaining the territory which he had traversed. He left there neither fortress nor garrison; but when he had returned into the subjected territory he separated it from Caledonia by a new rampart, more imposing than all those of his predecessors. For two years the

legions were employed in constructing it in stone, fortifying it with towers, and surrounding it with roads. The remains of this gigantic work attest to this day the power of those who raised it. The Caledonians, however, had just attempted another invasion when the emperor, who was marching against them, died at York (211 A.D.), and his son Caracalla, compelled to hastened back to Rome to protect the safety of the empire, hurriedly concluded with the rude tribes a peace which lasted for some years.

It was not until the year 228, under the reign of Diocletian and Maximilian, that the dangers which threatened Britain again disturbed the repose of the Emperors. Her shores were threatened by Saxon and Scandinavian pirates. A commander of Belgian origin named Carausius was sent against them, who crowned his success by causing himself to be proclaimed emperor by his legions. Diocletian conferred on him the title of Cæsar. This new sovereign was assassinated at York, and succeeded in the year 297 by his minister Allectus, who himself fell soon after before the power of Constantius Chlorus. When this prince died at York, his son Constantine, proclaimed emperor by his troops, carried with him on leaving Britain a great number of the young men of the country eager to serve in his armies.

The Roman empire no longer existed. The distant seat of power had been transferred to Constantinople. The province of Britain escaped from the imperial watchfulness. It was at the same time ill defended. The Caledonians at this period had yielded their place, either in fact or in name, to the Picts, so called perhaps by the Romans on account of the colours with which they painted their bodies. Side by side with them, and often driving them back upon their own territory were the Scots, originally from Ireland, from which country they crossed over in so great a number in their little flat-bottomed boats that they finally gave their own name to the country they invaded. Under the Emperor Valentinian we find them pursuing their depredations as far as London, and driven back to their own

country with great difficulty by Theodosius, father of Theodosius the Great. Before him and after his death, in the year 393, Britain presented a similar spectacle to that of the other Roman provinces. The generals who were in command there, were proclaimed emperors by their legions, assassinated by their rivals, or decapitated by order of the sovereign rulers of Rome or Constantinople, from the moment that they attempted to leave the island to extend their conquests. Every one of these attempts cost Britain a number of soldiers and contributed to weaken a race already deteriorated by foreign domination. In 420, under the Emperor Honorius, when the Empire was expiring under the attacks of the barbarians, the Britons deposing the Roman magistrates, proclaimed their independence, which was immediately recognized by the emperor. But the Britons were not in a condition to struggle against the invaders who were pressing them on all sides. Like the Roman Empire, their country was fated to fall into the hands of the barbarians.

Like the Roman Empire, however, Britain had already received the principle which was destined to save her from complete desolation. In the midst of political disorganization, and of power distributed among a hundred petty chiefs, all enemies and rivals, she had already heard the only name which has been given to men for their salvation. The gospel of Jesus Christ had been proclaimed upon her shores. At what epoch or by whom is not known. Probably Rome brought with her arms the Christian faith to the British people; the Christians were numerous in the imperial armies, and their zeal often won to Jesus Christ the souls of the vanquished. Up to the reign of Diocletian the progress of Christianity in Britain was not impeded by any severity. At that epoch (303—305) the great persecution which was raging throughout the empire extended itself to Britain. Constantius Chlorus, who was then governor, favourable though he was to the Gospel, was nevertheless unable to avoid calling around him the officers of his household and announcing to them the necessity of either relinquishing their trusts or abjuring the name of Christ. Those who were

cowardly enough to prefer earthly greatness to Christian fidelity found themselves disappointed in their ambitious hopes. The general immediately deprived them of office, remarking that men faithless to their God would be equally wanting in fidelity to their emperor. But the moderation of Constantius Chlorus was insufficient to extinguish the persecuting zeal of the interior magistrates; and the British Church soon counted its martyrs. The Christians took refuge in the forests and the hills. They were able to find brethren among the rude tribes of the north; for Tertullian tells us that, in the portion of Britain where the arms of the Romans had failed to penetrate, Jesus Christ had conquered souls. With the power of Constantine Christianity ascended the throne; the British Church was organized; she had sent three Bishops to the Council of Arles in 314; but Britain was about to undergo a new yoke; and her dawning Christianity was destined to encounter other enemies.



CHAPTER II.

THE RULE OF THE SAXONS TO THE INVASION OF THE DANES (449—832).

DISCORD prevailed in Britain. The petty rival chiefs, sometimes triumphant, sometimes defeated, united in vain against the Picts and Scots, whom the Roman walls no longer impeded now that the Roman power had disappeared. In this disorder, the Britons were dwindling in numbers day by day, when Vortigern, chief of Kent, conceived the project of calling to his assistance the Saxons, a famous people who inhabited the northern coasts of Germany and Denmark and extended their power even to a portion of the territory now known as Holland. Several tribes were descended from a common origin. The Jutes, the Angles, the Saxons (properly so called) all led the life of pirates, and many a time had they suddenly appeared upon the coasts of Britain or of Gaul, scattering terror among the inhabitants, whose houses they pillaged and burnt, killing all who resisted them. For a long time they risked their lives and sported with the dangers of the sea in

mere skiffs; but in 449, when Vortigern called to his aid two celebrated pirates among the Jutes, named Hengist and Horsa, the Saxon vessels were long, strongly built, and capable of carrying a considerable number of men and of wrestling with the fury of the waves. The pirates responded promptly to the appeal, and for some time they faithfully observed their engagements, driving the Picts and Scots back into their territory and fighting for Vortigern against his British enemies. It is related that the Saxon Hengist, having fortified himself at Thong-Caster, situated in the county of Lincoln, gave there a feast to King Vortigern. Hengist had sent for his daughter, the beautiful Rowena, who, bending the knee before the British sovereign, offered him the cup of welcome. Her beauty enchanted Vortigern, and he could not rest until he had obtained her hand.

Whether from a weakness for the father of his wife, or from gratitude for services, or from the impossibility of ridding himself of the allies whom he had sent for, Vortigern permitted Hengist to establish himself in the isle of Thanet; and gradually fresh vessels arrived bringing reinforcements for the foreign colony. Angles followed Jutes; and the Britons began to be anxious about these powerful neighbours. At the first quarrel swords were drawn from their scabbards. Their blades were equally good and keen; for the Britons had derived their military equipments from the Romans, and the Saxons, passionately fond of iron, attached more importance to their arms than to any other possession. But the Britons had been weakened by their old dissensions; the Saxons allied themselves with the Picts and Scots, against whom they had been originally called to fight, and several indecisive battles ended in a truce. It is even related that the two parties being assembled at a banquet at Stonehenge, on the 1st of May, Hengist cried out to the Saxons, in their language, "Draw your swords!" and, at the same moment, the long knives concealed under the garments of the Saxons were plunged into the hearts of their entertainers. Vortigern alone was spared, no doubt at the intercession of Rowena. The war began; the Britons were defeated, and Eric,

son of Hengist, became in 457 the first Saxon king of the county of Kent, the Isle of Wight, and that part of the coast of Hampshire which faces that island.

The success of Hengist and Horsa naturally attracted new hordes. In the year 477 the Saxons, under the command of Ella, founded the kingdom of Sussex (South Sax), which comprised only the present county of Sussex. In the year 519 other Saxons, under the orders of Cerdic, completed the invasion of South Britain, and extended themselves from the county of Surrey, bordering upon Sussex and Kent, to the eastern extremity of England; they occupied also Surrey and all that portion of Hampshire not in the possession of the Jutes, together with Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, and Devonshire, not even leaving to the Britons the whole of the county of Cornwall. This new kingdom took the name of Wessex (West Sax).

The invaders grew bolder. In 530 a new body of Saxons, the name of whose leader is not recorded in history, arrived, and established themselves upon the northern border of the kingdoms of Kent and Wessex, founding there the kingdom of Essex (East Sax), the importance of which was due to the Thames and London, since it comprised only the county of Essex, the small territory of Middlesex, and the southern part of the county of Herts.

"Thus," says M. Guillaume Guizot in his *History of Alfred the Great*, "the Saxons originally rested their power upon the first state founded by the Jutes at the south-eastern extremity of England. They surrounded it by their own settlements, and all established themselves in the southern part of the island." They had scarcely completed their migrations when the Angles, who had then arrived only in small numbers, and were mingled with the Jutes, began on their own account to invade the eastern coast. About the year 527 several bands of Angles arrived under different chiefs, but it was not until some years later that they united to form the kingdom of East Anglia, which comprised the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, the isle of Ely, and probably a portion of Bedfordshire. The territories of Norfolk

and Suffolk owe even their names to two tribes of Angles, the North folk and the South folk, while the entire race have given their name to England. This new kingdom, still isolated as well as defended by the sea, was fortified by fens and by many rivers. Where natural defences were wanting the Angles raised earthworks, long known as the Giant's Dyke, then as the Devil's Dyke. In spite of the draining of the fen, the line of these works can be traced to this day.

In the year 547, new bands of Angles, led by a chief named Ida, landed upon the north-east coast and founded there the kingdom of Bernicia, which comprised Northumberland and the south of Pentland, between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth. Some years later, in 560, other Angles, no less enterprising than their predecessors, established themselves from the southern limit of Bernicia as far as the Humber, and from one sea to the other, occupying all the territory of the counties of Lancaster, York, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Durham. This was the kingdom of Deira. These two colonies were united under the same sceptre in 617, and took the name of Northumbria.

The Angles began to advance from the coasts. In the year 586 they occupied all the country bounded on the north by the river Humber and the kingdom of Deira; on the west, by Wales, which alone remained in the hands of the Britons; on the south, by the Saxon kingdoms; and on the south-east, by the Angles of East Anglia. Mercia, as the new kingdom was called, comprised then on the south-east the northern part of the counties of Hertford and Bedford; on the east, all the counties of Northampton, Huntingdon, and Rutland; on the north, the counties of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, and Chester; on the west, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Herefordshire; in the centre of the island, Warwickshire and Leicestershire; on the south, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and the county of Buckingham. In this kingdom, the most extensive of all, the British population had not been destroyed or driven back, as they had in the greater portion of other parts; they continued to inhabit their ancient country, mingled with and subject to the Angles.

Such was the division of Britain among the conquerors, and the constitution of the Saxon kingdoms. This is what is known as the Heptarchy, or Octarchy, according to whether we place the denomination before or after the union of the kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia in a single kingdom of Northumbria. Such was the new scene of the wars which were destined to break out again and deluge Britain, now become England, with blood.

A more gentle influence was soon to exercise its effect upon the sanguinary passion of the barbarous races. The British Christians, though vanquished and driven back into the narrow territory of Cambria or Wales, do not seem to have attempted to convert their conquerors. For a moment they had themselves run the risk of falling into the heresies of Pelagius, an Irish monk who denied the doctrine of original sin; but the missionaries from Gaul, Saint Germain and Saint Loup, had succeeded in 429 and 446 in uprooting among them these disastrous tendencies. One day Saint Germain, who had been a soldier before being a bishop, found himself in the presence of a band of Picts and Saxons who were laying waste the coast. Putting himself at the head of his flock, he marched against the enemy amidst loud cries of "Alleluia!" These cries taken up by the neighbouring echoes terrified the pirates, who fled; hence this peaceful victory became known by the name of "The Battle of the Alleluias."

The Britons were not heretics, but with the independence which always characterized their race they differed from Rome and from the Eastern Church upon various points of little importance in themselves, though they had often created divisions in Christendom. For no reason that has come down to us the Britons celebrated Easter in accordance with the customs of the Eastern Church—that is to say, at the fourteenth day of the moon, whatever might be the day on which that event fell, in imitation of the Jews who on that day offered up the Paschal lamb. The Western Church, on the contrary, postponed the celebration of Easter till the Sunday following. Nothing more was needed to breed dissensions between the British



SINCE YOUR INTENTIONS ARE GOOD, YOU CAN SPEAK FREELY TO MY PEOPLE.

bishops and the missionaries despatched from Rome by Pope Gregory the Great. For some years previously, Gregory, not yet become a bishop, and being in fact only a simple priest, passing through the slave-market in Rome, had been struck by the handsome appearance of some young persons offered there for sale. Learning that they belonged to the race of Angles, or Saxons, "They would not be Angles but angels," he exclaimed, "if they were Christians;" and he conceived the project of going himself to preach the faith of Jesus Christ to a people so well endowed by nature. His friends were only able to prevail on him to renounce his intention by inducing the Pope to forbid his departure from Rome. When in his turn he was elevated to the episcopal dignity in the most important see of the Western Church, he did not forget the Saxons whose conversion had previously occupied his thoughts. He endeavoured first to inflame with his zeal the young slaves whom he had caused to be placed in convents; but the Saxons were apparently not disposed to become Missionaries, for in the year 595 the Pope despatched to Britain a young monk named Augustine, prior of the Convent of St. Andrew at Rome, accompanied by forty friars. They took the road towards Gaul; but they had scarcely arrived at Aix, when they heard such terrible accounts of the ferocity of the Anglo-Saxons that they were alarmed and wrote to the Pope to ask his leave to retrace their footsteps. Gregory, on the contrary, encouraged them to persevere in their enterprise, and furnished with interpreters by the good offices of Brunehaut, who was reigning over Austrasia in the name of her grandsons, they arrived in 597 in the Isle of Thanet. Augustine sent immediately one of his monks to Ethelbert, king of Kent, announcing his intention of coming to preach Christianity to his court.

The place could not have been better chosen. A powerful prince in his domains, Ethelbert was their Bretwalda, or general chief of all the Heptarchy. This title, which was in no way well defined, but which conferred a certain influence in the councils of the seven Saxon states, seems to have been accorded

to a kind of merit understood by all. Two chiefs had already borne it before Ethelbert—Ella, first king of Sussex, and Ceawlin, king of Wessex. The new Bretwalda was a pagan, but he had married a Christian wife, Bertha, daughter of Charibert, king of Paris: she had reserved to herself the free exercise of her religion; a French bishop had even accompanied her. Ethelbert had no repugnance towards Christianity and he consented to receive the Roman missionaries. "Be careful to grant them an audience in the open air," said the pagan priests however; "their maledictions will be less powerful there than under a roof." It was therefore in the open field that the Saxon Bretwalda awaited the approach of the Christian priests. They advanced bearing a crucifix and a banner on which was painted the image of the Saviour. They made the air resound with their grave canticles. The imagination of the barbarians was no doubt struck by these ceremonies, and when Augustine by the aid of an interpreter had explained to the king the leading doctrines of the Christian faith, and asked permission to preach to his subjects the religion which they had come to proclaim to him, Ethelbert mildly replied, "I am not disposed to abandon the gods of my fathers for an unknown and uncertain faith; but since your intentions are good and your words full of gentleness, you can speak freely to my people. I will prevent any one interfering with you, and will furnish food to you and your monks." Augustine overjoyed, directed his steps towards the neighbouring city of Canterbury which he entered chanting, "O Eternal Father, we supplicate Thee according to Thy mercy turn Thy anger from this city and from Thy sacred place, for we have sinned. Alleluia!"

The preaching of Augustine and the sanctity of his life exercised a powerful influence over the Saxons. Numerous converts already pressed around him when King Ethelbert decided to embrace the Christian religion. His conversion attracted his subjects in a mass to the new Faith, and Pope Gregory, delighted with the success of the Mission, sent to

Augustine the episcopal pallium[1] with the title of Archbishop of Canterbury. At the same time Gregory advised the new prelate not to destroy the pagan temples to which the people had been accustomed, but to consecrate them to the worship of Jesus Christ, and to transform the pagan festivals into joyful family meetings at which the Christian Saxons could eat their oxen instead of sacrificing them to false gods.

With these sage counsels Gregory sent a reinforcement of missionaries; but they did not suffice for the zeal or the views of Augustine, who resolved to address himself to the British bishops in Wales asking their assistance in the work of evangelization. The Britons were jealous and anxious. They consulted a hermit of great reputation for sanctity upon the claims of Augustine to their trust and obedience. "If the stranger comes from God, follow him," said the hermit. "But how shall we know if he is from God?" asked the Britons. "By his humility." . . . The reply still appeared to the envoys to be vague. "If he rises at your approach, know that he is the leader sent by God to direct his people," continued the hermit. "If he remains seated reject him because of his pride." Fortified with this precise instruction the British priests, with seven Bishops and the Abbot of Bangor, presented themselves at the conference. Augustine was seated, and did not rise to receive them. The question was already settled in their minds when the Archbishop of Canterbury stated his demands. He desired that the British priests should henceforth celebrate the festival of Easter on the same day as the Western Church; that they should employ the Roman forms in the ceremony of baptism, and that they should join their efforts with his for the conversion of the Saxons. All these proposals were rejected. Then Augustine rose and in a loud voice exclaimed, "You refuse to labour to convert the Saxons! You will perish by the swords of the Saxons." This prediction was remembered some years later when all the monks

[1] An ornament of woollen texture, sprinkled with black crosses, which the Pope sends to the Archbishops and sometimes to Bishops.

of Bangor were massacred by the Northumbrians in a Saxon expedition into Cambria.

In spite of the coolness of the British Bishops the work of conversion went on. The zeal of Ethelbert had already engaged his nephew Sebert, king of Essex, to receive baptism. A church had been founded in London which possessed a bishop. Another prelate had his seat at Rochester. Ethelbert had also gained over to the Christian faith the chief of East Anglia, Redwald, who became after him Bretwalda of the Heptarchy. But the wife of Redwald was still a pagan and his subjects were attached to the religion of their ancestors. The king set up two altars in the same temple, one dedicated to Odin and the other to the God of the Christians; but the new faith soon prevailed over its rival, and East Anglia took its place among the Christian kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

Christianity had not yet penetrated into Northumbria when the king Edwin married a daughter of Ethelbert, a Christian like her father. The queen came accompanied by a Roman bishop named Paulinus; but the king remained faithful to the worship of his forefathers in spite of the solicitations of his wife, of Paulinus, and even of the Pope. He had, however, consented to the child of Ethelburga being baptized; and the day was at hand when his scruples were destined to be overcome. In his youth, during a long exile and in the midst of serious perils, there had appeared before him, doubtless in a dream, a person of venerable aspect, who asked him, "What wouldst thou give to one who should deliver thee to-day?" "All that I possess," replied the Saxon. "If he asked thee only to follow his counsels, wouldst thou obey?" "Unto death," was the answer. "It is well," said the apparition, at the same time placing his hand softly upon his head; "when one shall return and make thee this sign, follow him." Edwin had escaped from the dangers which threatened him, and his dream had remained deeply engraved upon his memory.

One day when he was alone, the door of his apartment opened, and Paulinus entering, softly placed his hand upon his head.

"Dost thou remember?" he asked, and the Saxon, falling on his knees, promised to do whatever he should desire. Still thoughtful and prudent, however, while accepting baptism for himself, he reserved the right of his subjects to act as might seem well to them. The Council of Wise men or Aldermen was called together, and the king having informed them of his



change of faith as the basis of a new doctrine, asked them what they thought of it. The chief of the priests was there, and spoke first. "Our gods are powerless," he said; "I have served them with more zeal and fidelity than all the people, yet I am neither richer nor more honoured. I am weary of the gods."

An ancient warrior near the king rose at this speech.

"O king," he said, "thou rememberest perhaps in the winter days when thou art seated with thy captains near a good fire, lighted in a warm apartment, while it is raining and snowing out of doors, that a little bird has entered by one door and gone out by another with fluttering wings. He has passed a moment of happiness, sheltered from the rain and the storm; but the bird vanishes with the quickness of a glance, and from winter he returns again to winter. Such it appears to me is the life of man upon this earth. The unknown time is irksome to us. It perplexes us because we know nothing of it. If thy new faith teaches us something, it is worthy of our adherence."

The whole assembly took the side of the two chiefs; but when Paulinus proposed, as a token of renunciation to false gods, that their idols should be cast down, all hesitated except the high priest. He demanded a horse and a javelin in the place of the mare and the white rod which pertained to his old office, and galloping towards the temple he struck the images with his weapon. The people trembling awaited some token of the wrath of the gods; but the heavens and the earth remained silent, and the king was baptized with all the most distinguished of his people, who were accompanied by a crowd of warriors. Edwin soon became Bretwalda, and his reign was an epoch of repose and happiness for his subjects.

During the struggles which recommenced after the death of Edwin, three kingdoms fortified themselves, and took the lead over the others. These were Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex. These three divisions of the Heptarchy were predominant in the year 800, when Egbert, prince of Wessex, returned to his country after a long exile. He had passed a considerable portion of the time at the court of Charlemagne, and had thus acquired a development of intellect and of knowledge rare at that time among the Saxon princes. The first part of his reign was peaceful; but from the year 809 forward the sword of Egbert was drawn from the scabbard, and for many years he pursued his conquests from kingdom to kingdom. He had already extended his dominion over the British people of Cornwall, who

had consented to pay him tribute, when he subjugated Mercia and the kingdom of Kent, Essex, and East Anglia. He had carried his victorious arms up to the frontiers of Northumbria. The chiefs, anxious and already beaten in anticipation, came to meet him, recognizing him for their sovereign, and promising him obedience. Egbert accepted their homage, and retired without fighting a battle. Nearly the whole Heptarchy had accepted his laws and the title of Bretwalda had conferred upon him an authority more considerable than in the case of any of his predecessors. He continued, however, to assume the simple title of king of Wessex. He reigned until the year 836 happy and powerful; but the last years of his reign were troubled by the first invasions of the Danes. Egbert repulsed them with glory; but if he had possessed a spark of the almost prophetic foresight of Charlemagne, he would have wept, like the Frankish hero, over the infinite woes with which these men from the North menaced his country.



CHAPTER III.

THE DANES.—ALFRED THE GREAT (836—901).

FOR nearly four centuries the Saxons had been established in Britain; they had become the sole masters of the country, and had there forgotten the original source of their wealth. But the nation from which they had sprung was still prolific in warriors, vigorous, enterprising, and possessed of nothing in the world but their arms and their ships, for all the property of the family belonged by right to the eldest son: warriors, too, ardent in conquering and in obtaining wealth at the [illegible]. The peninsula of Jutland and the [illegible] of Scandinavia sent year by year [illegible] a great number of ships, [illegible] styled themselves: "The tempest [illegible] say, "it takes us wherever [illegible] from the coast of [illegible] under the [illegible] whole island became

surrounded by their light skiffs. The Saxons had been compelled to organize along the shores a continual resistance, and to appoint officers whose duty it was to call out the people in a body to repulse the enemy. Three serious contests took place in 839—at Rochester, at Canterbury, and at London. King Ethelwulf himself was wounded in battle. But shortly after, the internal dissensions which were agitating the whole of France, attracted the pirates as the dead body attracts the vulture. During twelve years the Danish fleets altered their course, and repaired to the French coasts; when they reappeared, in 831, in England, their successes were at first alarming; three hundred and fifty of their vessels ascended the Thames as far as London, and the town was sacked. But the king awaited the enemy at Oakly: they were defeated, and suffered great losses. After having met with severe reverses at several other parts of the Saxon territory, the Danes withdrew from there, and respected the English coasts during the remainder of the reign of Ethelwulf.

It is at this period that we see appear in the pages of history the name of the fourth son of Ethelwulf, him whom England was one day to call Alfred the Great, Alfred the Well-beloved. He had first seen the light of day at Wantage, in the heart of the forests of Berkshire, in 849, two years before the departure of the Danes. His mother, Osberga, a noble and pious woman, gave herself up entirely to the task of rearing her little son, who soon began to excite the hope and admiration of all who saw him. Doubtless the predilection which his father had for this little child, induced him to give a startling proof of his affection, for Alfred was scarcely four years of age when he was sent to Rome with [illegible] of nobles and servants, to ask for himself, [illegible] and the holy unction. The [illegible] of the Saxen monarch, and he con[illegible] hands the little king, and [illegible] sacrament of confirmation. Alfred returned to [illegible] doubt the recollection of what he had [illegible] began thenceforward to

instil into his soul the desire to gain knowledge, the pursuit of which was probably very rare among the young Saxons. His mother, one day, was holding a pretty manuscript in her hand, a collection of ancient Saxon poems, and was showing it to her four sons who were playing beside her. "I will give this pretty book," she said, "to whichever of you shall learn it the soonest by heart." Ethelbald, Ethelbert, and Ethelred eyed the book with indifference, and went on with their game; but little Alfred approached his mother: "Really," said he, "will you give this beautiful manuscript to whoever shall learn it by heart the quickest and who shall come and repeat it all to you?" The large, round eyes of the child were fixed upon his mother: she repeated her promise, and even gave up the manuscript into the keeping of the little prince. He quickly hurried away with it to his master, who was able to read aloud to him the verses which it contained, for, alas! Alfred could not read until he was twelve years of age. He soon returned, triumphant, repeated the lines, received the book from his mother, and preserved thenceforth throughout his life a taste for the old Saxon ballads of which he had thus first made the acquaintance.

Alfred was six years old and had lost his mother, when his father, wishing to make the pilgrimage to Rome in his turn, took his youngest son with him: the Saxon king spent a year with the Pope, carrying from church to church his sumptuous devotion. On his return journey, he stopped at the court of Charles the Bold, a court elegant and polite in comparison with the still rude customs of the Saxons; and, attracted by the beauty as well as the arts of Princess Judith, daughter of Charles, Ethelwulf married her, notwithstanding the disparity in their ages, and brought her in triumph into his kingdom. But the two persons whom the old king loved best, his young wife and his youngest son, were distrusted by the rest of his family, as well as by his people: Judith claimed a share of the sovereign power, according to the old custom in Britain and Germany, which had become odious to the Saxons by reason of

the crimes of several queens; the elder sons of Ethelwulf feared that their young brother, so dear to their father, might be raised above themselves; the eldest, Ethelbald, revolted, and his father found a general rising against him when he returned to England. The old king did not resist; he ceded to his son the greater portion of his states and died at the end of two years, having shared equally between his sons his kingdom of Wessex, previously enlarged by the addition of Kent and Sussex. The tributary states of Northumbria and Mercia had shaken off the feeble authority of Ethelwulf and had recommenced their internal wars. The Danes profited by these disputes, and had taken up with renewed ardour their terrible incursions upon the English coasts.

In this alarming situation of affairs the sons of Ethelwulf foresaw that the division of Wessex would be their ruin; instead, therefore, of sharing it among themselves they agreed that each should reign over the whole in turn, according to their ages. The reigns of the three eldest were short. Supported successively by their brothers, they fought against the Danes, and all died in the flower of their youth; the last, Ethelred, was still on the throne, when an invasion of the Danes, who penetrated as far as Reading, called all the men of Wessex to arms. The war had a short time before assumed a new aspect; the Danes did not content themselves with descending upon the most fertile portions of the coast with their long ships, or with taking possession of all the horses. Overrunning the country, they ravaged and sacked everything in their passage, and re-embarked in their vessels before the frightened inhabitants had had time to rise up to resist them. From pirates, the Danes had become conquerors, and desired to establish themselves in that England which their predecessors, the Saxons, had formerly snatched from the Britons. Already possessed of East Anglia and a portion of Northumbria, they were threatening Wessex, and had intrenched themselves at Reading. Alfred had recently been married to a princess of Mercia, but his new relations did not give him any support against the Danes, when, having

beaten several detached corps of the pirates, Ethelred and Alfred attacked the citadel. The greater number of the Danes sprang outside the walls, "like veritable wolves," says Asser, the historian of Alfred, and the struggle recommenced.

The Danes were nearly all tall men; their wandering and adventurous life favoured the development of their muscular powers; they did not fear death, for the Walhalla or Paradise of their god Odin, promised to the brave warriors who fell in battle all the pleasure which they esteemed most on earth. The figure of the raven, the confidant of their god, floated on the red flags of the Danes; if its dark wings fluttered on the long folds of silk, victory was certain; if they remained motionless, the Northmen feared defeat. The wings of the raven were fluttering triumphantly before Reading, for the Saxons were defeated and were obliged to retreat.

They had not lost courage, however, and four days later they returned to give battle once more to their enemies; the Danes had already issued forth from their intrenchments, but Ethelred was still in his tent, attending holy mass, and would not hurry to the scene of battle, in spite of urgent messages from Alfred. The latter, therefore, attacked their opponents single-handed, near to a little tree which the Danes had chosen as a rallying-spot. The Saxons fought with the fury of despair; Ethelred soon came to support his brother, and the Danes, beaten upon the great plain of Assendon, took to flight; but only to return a fortnight afterwards, their number swelled by the reinforcements which were continually arriving by sea. Wessex alone had sustained eight battles in one year; her resources were becoming exhausted in such an unequal struggle; Ethelred, wounded, had just died, and Alfred found himself alone at the age of twenty-two years (871), subject to a peculiar illness which had succeeded to a slow fever of his boyhood, and of which the attacks would frequently bring him to the very verge of the grave. His men and his resources exhausted, a ninth and unfortunate battle completely disabled him; he was compelled to sue for peace. The Danes willingly consented to his pro-



ARE YOU TOO PROUD TO TURN THE LOAVES?

posal; there were other princes to vanquish, other territories to conquer, less valiantly defended than Wessex, on which they proposed to revenge themselves when it should stand alone in its resistance to them. In 875 they had finished their conquest; Wessex alone still preserved its independence, and three Danish kings who had passed the winter at Cambridge embarked secretly, by night, to attack the coast of Dorset. Vainly did Alfred strive to resist his enemies by sea; his ships were beaten, and soon the long line of incendiarism and murder which always marked the progress of the Danes extended as far as Wareham. This was past endurance, and Alfred, stricken down on a sick-bed, asked for and obtained peace at the price of gold. The Danes retired after having sworn friendship upon some relics brought by the Christian king and on their sacred bracelets steeped in the blood of their victims, exchanging hostages, whose fate they troubled themselves very little about. The very night after peace was concluded, the Saxon horsemen were destroyed and cut up piecemeal by the Danes, who took possession of their horses in order to make a raid into the interior of the country. The remonstrances of Alfred were powerless to stop these disastrous expeditions, so easy for an enemy who threatened the country from all sides.

Alfred took to arms once more; and for awhile the issue of the war seemed to incline in his favour; he had been the first to see the necessity for attacking the Danes on the ocean, which was incessantly bringing them inexhaustible reinforcements, and his vessels having met the pirates during a storm had defeated and dispersed them, thus cutting off all hope of succour to the Danes whom Alfred was besieging in Exeter. This glimmering of success did not last however; in 878 the enemy was once more invading Wessex in two formidable troops; one of them was stopped and even defeated by some faithful retainers of Alfred's, but the second army, which had entered the kingdom by land, was advancing without opposition from town to town. The subjects of Alfred were weary and discouraged. The king, on whom they had founded such great hopes, had lost in their

eyes his prestige; brave but uncertain, he had not profited by the advantages which his military genius had sometimes given him, and his people complained of his inflexibility, of his pride, of the severity which he manifested towards offenders; of the indifference which he displayed towards the unfortunate. They did not enter with any spirit into the struggle against the invaders, and the Saxon kings held no power but by the free will of their subjects. The clergy, who were especially hated by the pagan enemy, fled to France, carrying with them from their country its relics and the treasures from the churches. The agricultural population submitted to cultivate the land for the Danes. The latter were seeking Alfred; but the king had suddenly abandoned his post, and left by the struggle sick and wounded to the heart by the defection of his subjects, he had disappeared, his place of concealment being unknown and not even suspected.

The fugitive king did not know where to go. Wandering from forest to forest, from cave to cave, he went his way, trying to conceal his deep disgrace, learning in his cruel wanderings, as his historian and friend Asser says, "that there is one Lord alone, Master of all things and all men, before whom every knee bends, who holds in His hand the hearts of kings, and who sometimes makes His happy servants feel the lash of adversity, to teach them, when they suffer, not to despair of the Divine mercy, and to be without pride when they prosper."

Alfred wanted confidence in God, when he arrived in the island of the Nobles (Ethelingaia), now called Athelney, in order to hide himself there in the hovel of a cowherd. He received him at first as a traveller who had lost his way, and ended by learning in confidence from his guest that he was a Saxon noble of the court of King Alfred, flying from the vengeance of the Danes. The worthy Ulfoath was perfectly satisfied with the explanation, and allowed the fugitive to remain at his house.

His wife was not in the secret, and was annoyed, no doubt, to see her work increased by the presence of this unknown guest. She would ask him at times to perform little services, and

would leave him in charge of some household duties. One Sunday, while the husband was gone to lead the beasts to the field and the wife was busy with several little matters, she had left some loaves or thin cakes by the fire, which were baking slowly on the red stone of the hearth. Alfred had been commissioned to watch them, but, absorbed in his sad meditations, he had forgotten that the bread was burning; the smell warned the housewife; she sprang at a bound to the fireplace, and quickly turning her cakes, she called out angrily to the king, "Whoever you may be, are you too proud to turn the loaves? You will not take the slightest heed of them, but you will be very glad to eat some of them presently." Alfred did not lose his temper; he laughed, and helped the woman to finish her task. A few days later the cowherd's wife learnt with dismay the name of the guest whom she had thus scolded.

Some of the faithful subjects of Alfred, pursued by the Danes, took refuge also in the island of Nobles, where they discovered to their great astonishment their king. Secretly and by degrees the rumour that Alfred was living spread through his family, who came in search of him. The little band became greater day by day, and the king was beginning to gain courage. In his solitude and humiliation, God had taken charge of this great soul which had hitherto forgotten Him, and which regained through religious faith the necessary energy to struggle against the enemies of his country.

The Danes had not profited by their victory. They had established themselves in the conquered country as plunderers, and not as owners. The inhabitants of Wessex were writhing under their cruel and capricious rule. They had now forgotten the rigorous acts with which they had reproached Alfred, and regretted that the Christian king was no longer at their head. Exasperated by their sufferings, the Saxons were ripe for revolt.

Such were Alfred's prospects when he began with his companions the work of re-establishing himself in his country. A solid bridge, defended by two towers, enabled the king to issue out easily from his retreat in his fortress. He gathered around

him all the malcontents before making anybody aware of his identity, and without announcing his great projects; each day he saw his little army swell in numbers, and he defeated the Danes in every skirmish which he chanced to have with them. He then went back to the island of Nobles. It is even said that he went by day, disguised as a minstrel, into the very camp of the Danes, in order to ascertain their numerical strength. In the month of May, 878, he finally decided to attack them openly. Secret messengers were despatched through the neighbourhood, who said to the Saxons: "King Alfred is alive. Assemble in the forest of Selwood, at Egbert's field; he will be there, and you shall all march together against the Danes." The Saxons, desperate, were rushing there in crowds, and soon Alfred's standard, bearing the golden dragon, was boldly unfurled before the Danish raven.

The secret had been well kept. The Danish king, Godrun, was vaguely aware that a number of Saxons were assembled in the neighbourhood, but he knew neither how many they mustered, nor the name of their chief, when he found himself suddenly attacked on the plain of Ethandune. The Saxons were in high spirits: "It is for your own sakes that you are about to fight," Alfred had said to them. "Show that you are men, and deliver your country from the hands of these strangers." The Danes had not had time to recover from their surprise before Alfred was upon them, his whole army following him. The standard-bearer was pushing to the front, accomplishing prodigies of valour: "It is St. Neots himself," Alfred cried, designating a saint held in great reverence by the Saxons, and an ancestor of his own. His soldiers gained fresh courage at these words; the Danes were beaten, and pursued, and they perished in great numbers. King Godrun, shut up with his court at the fortress of Chippenham, was compelled to surrender after a siege which lasted three weeks. He gave hostages, without taking any in exchange, a proceeding very humiliating to the Danes, and Alfred wisely imposed upon him an agreement useful in securing the definitive tranquillity of England, if not

consistent with the spiritual welfare of the Danes; the conqueror exacted that the defeated enemy should embrace the Christian religion. Godrun and his son were baptized and settled in the portion of land which Alfred conceded to them. Finding the impossibility of driving from the country the whole of the Danes, who were already masters of the land in Northumbria, in Mercia, and in East Anglia, Alfred hoped to accomplish, by the aid of Christianity and his right over part of the land, a fusion of the Danish and Saxon races, and to secure by that union a kind of rampart against any new Scandinavian invasions.

He was not mistaken. In the year following, a Danish fleet entered the Thames; but in vain did the warriors call for help to Godrun, who was established in the country. He remained deaf to their voices, and they, discouraged by his refusal, went away again and pursued their ravages on the coast of Flanders.

For more than thirteen years peace reigned over all England. One or two little isolated invasions served to exercise the energy of Alfred's troops, and each day his forces were augmenting. But Godrun was dead, and a dangerous enemy now threatened the Saxon king: the famous pirate Hastings, already advanced in age, but still passionately fond of the "game of war" was encamped upon the coast of France, at Boulogne, in 892. Wherever he appeared, death and ruin followed in his wake. The black raven always unfurled its wings for him; he was always assured of victory before the fray began. He sailed forth in the spring of 893, and instead of descending upon the lands already held by the Danes, he disembarked in Kent, a country rich and fertile, inhabited entirely by Saxons; and, dividing his army into two corps, he lay awaiting Alfred, who was advancing in haste to resist him.

The Danish pirate had cleverly organized the attack. Already the Danish population of East Anglia were profiting by his presence to attack the Saxon towns; but Alfred had studied too well the art of war to disperse his army over the country; he led the whole of his available force against Hastings. There the greater portion of the enemy's army, protected by a forest

and a river, were met by the Saxon king, who sent out at the same time several small bodies of men in pursuit of the Danish warriors who were pillaging the country, staying by these means the progress of the invasion, and opposing with exemplary patience the ruses of the barbarians. Hastings appeared to grow weary of this: he asked for peace, and sent his young sons as hostages. Alfred had just returned them to him after having baptized them, when the Danes, caring little for their plighted word, began to march towards Essex, which they intended to attack, passing by way of the Thames. The king hastened at once in pursuit of them and to the support of his eldest son, Edward, who was defending the frontier. They joined their forces; a great battle was fought near Farnham in the county of Surrey; the Danes were vanquished and driven as far as the isle of Mersey, which they fortified for their defence. The king attacked them at once; but while he had been away recruiting his forces a Danish fleet threatened the coast of Devonshire. Alfred marched against the new invaders, while the forces which he left behind fought against Hastings, and in a sortie got possession of the wife and children of that chief. These were sent to Alfred; but the Christian warrior could not forget that he had presented the young barbarians at the baptismal fount, and sent them back to their father loaded with presents.

The pirate, however, was not overcome by his foe's generosity. He attacked Mercia, sustained by the Danish hordes established in the country. Abandoning all thought of the conquests which he had originally intended, and the kingdom which he had wished to found, he once more took up the irregular invasions by which he had acquired so much wealth, and thought only of plundering the Saxon territory. But the subjects of Alfred had learnt some useful lessons; they rose with one accord against the foreign enemy, and when the king, returning in haste from Devonshire, arrived in the vicinity of the Severn, he found himself at the head of a numerous army which allowed him to completely surround the trenches of Hastings. The Danes had

been decimated by hunger: they had even eaten their horses. Making a last desperate effort, they opened up a passage straight through the ranks of their enemies, and took refuge in Chester, where they spent the winter.

In the spring-time, the long vessels, the "water-serpents," as the pirates would affectionately call them, invariably brought reinforcements to them. In 895, Hastings began by attacking Wales, finding the states of King Alfred too well defended. He ended, however, by retreating to the isle of Mersey, from whence he set out in 896 to establish himself on the river Lea, in the north of London. He had raised a fortress and there defended himself valiantly, when King Alfred perceived that he could stop all the enemy's navigation by river. He accordingly constructed a canal, and reduced the Danes to despair: their fleet was on dry ground. They abandoned it, and marched in a northern direction. This time the old pirate was beaten. Wearied by this struggle against a man of energy equal to his own, and in the enjoyment of the youth and vigour which he no longer possessed, he assembled his vessels in the spring of 897, and leaving definitively the English coast, he ascended the Seine and extorted from Charles the Simple a donation of land in the vicinity of Chartres. He established himself there, and Rollo found him there fifteen years later, spending in peace the remainder of his stormy life.

The Danes who remained in England had reacquired a taste for adventurous expeditions. They assembled along the coast of Northumberland to organize an attack on the southern portion of the kingdom; but Alfred had long resolved to fight his enemies with their own weapons. Having ridded himself of Hastings, he had had time to look to his navy, and the Danes found themselves opposed by vessels larger and more rapid than their own. The struggle began on all sides. Wherever the pirates advanced to the attack they found Saxon vessels to check them. The contests were of frequent occurrence; they were not invariably favourable to the Saxons, but the Danes suffered great losses: their ships would often founder on the

coast and the cargo would be lost. In 897, the last Danish ships disappeared from England. Alfred had now only to heal his country of the wounds left on it after all its struggles, which had cemented the union of the several kingdoms, in calling them all to the common defence under a single chief placed above them by reason of his conspicuous ability. After the war with the Danes, Alfred, who had merely assumed the title of King of Wessex, had added to his states Mercia, Wales, and Kent.

It was a kingdom composed of incongruous elements; but Alfred understood the management of them by reason of his far-seeing wisdom. In Mercia, originally peopled by the English, he established a viceroy chosen from their royal family, the Ealderman, or duke Ethelred, and gave him his own daughter in marriage. When Ethelred died, after having faithfully served his father-in-law, the Mercians themselves placed in the hands of his widow Ethelfleda the reins of government.

Kent already belonged to Alfred. Its unhappy inhabitants, subject more than any others to the Danish invasions, had displayed the most passionate affection and gratitude towards the prince who had effected their deliverance. The Welsh chiefs swore allegiance to him. Alfred established one of them, Amorant, as viceroy of Wales, leaving him thus all his prerogatives and full command over his subjects.

While he was thus organizing his Saxon kingdom, Alfred was maintaining firm and friendly relations with the Danish kingdom, which he had allowed to be established near to his own. The propagation of Christianity amongst the pagans was his principal means of effecting the fusion of the races, which he foresaw and which he hoped ardently to see accomplished, but which he could not completely finish during his own lifetime. Some laws were already in force and respected by both races: the crime of murder was punished in the same manner in each state, and Alfred caused the people to rigorously respect the treaties which bound them together; the pirates of East Anglia who came to pursue their ravages along the coasts, being hanged without mercy. The Danes established in England had already become

Englishmen in the eyes of Alfred, and were compelled to observe the laws of the English population.

But, although thus providing for the future, Alfred felt completely safe for the present. The Saxon kings had never maintained a standing army: at the time of an invasion, when the necessity for defending himself or attacking was felt by the sovereign, he would send into the boroughs and through the country a messenger carrying his sword, unsheathed, who would cry aloud: "Whoever shall not wish to be held a worthless fellow, let him leave his house and come and join in the expedition." But the day after the battle the warriors would disperse, and if the enemy should recommence hostilities, the king and the country found themselves unprepared. Alfred divided into two great divisions all his subjects capable of bearing arms: one was always on a war footing, ready to march against the enemy; the other portion of them would work in the fields and cultivate the soil until the very day when they would be called out to follow the golden dragon, while their companions would disperse and quietly retire to their cottages. The king made use of these soldiers in fortifying towns, in constructing citadels, and in putting the whole country in a position to defend itself. It was thus that he was able to withstand the attacks of Hastings, the most severe which England had as yet encountered.

So much wisdom and foresight on the part of Alfred, naturally increased his regal importance and authority. Until this time, the Saxon kings had been essentially warriors; each "ealderman," or chief proprietor, ruled supreme in his own district, without troubling his sovereign; the clergy were nearly upon an equality with the king, and the offences committed against a bishop were punished with the same penalties as those committed against the king himself. Alfred re-established the royal supremacy by the force of his own intellectual superiority; his ealdermen became his officers, and his profound piety, as well as his respect for the clergy, did not prevent his disengaging himself from any servile submission to the Church. The priests had

suffered and trembled more than any other class under the rule of the pagan Danes; they obeyed without a murmur the orders of their liberator.

Justice was but badly administered in England, divided though it had been for a long time into tythings, hundredths and counties, and provided with local assemblies which corresponded to these territorial denominations. During the troubles which the Danish invasion had caused, and in the miseries which had followed, the Saxon proprietors had ceased to attend to their internal affairs; they neglected to select the judges. The assessors, or free men who should be present on the occasion of any trial, to help the judge with their advice, no longer answered when called upon to do so; only small numbers of witnesses would appear. The king undertook to re-establish order; he himself nominated the judges, and punished them severely when they ventured to give any decision in a case without previously consulting the assessors, whom he re-established in their original form—the germ of the institution now known as the jury. He was not even satisfied with all these cares; it often happened that he would revise the sentences of the judges, so zealously did he occupy himself with the administration of justice in his kingdom.

The judges hitherto had been charged with the civil administration as well as that of justice; they were succumbing under the weight of such onerous functions. Alfred relieved them, however, by nominating dukes, earls, and viscounts, who were entrusted with the administration of justice in the counties, the tythings and hundreds. He himself compiled for these magistrates a code of laws borrowed, some from the old mode of legislation in Kent, Wessex, and Mercia, and others from the Bible, from the books of Moses as well as from the New Testament; and they all unmistakeably bore the imprint of, and were modified by, the real Christian spirit which animated the king.

All these laws, the fruits of revealed wisdom or of the ancient experience of the people, Alfred submitted for approval to his subjects: "I have shown these laws to my wise men," said he in the preamble at the beginning of his code, "and the result

was that they were unanimous in wishing that they should be observed." These wise men, or "witans," forming an assembly called a "witenagemote" (an assembly of wise men), no longer represented, under Alfred, the entire nation, as in the time when the Saxons still preserved in their simplicity their Germanic institutions. At that period all the free men (ceorls), whether proprietors or not, composed part of it. By degrees the free men disappeared from it, and the "thanes," or proprietors, alone remained; but the lower class of "thanes," although invested with the same rights as the royal "thanes," were less wealthy; it was more difficult for them to leave their affairs in order to repair to the Witenagemote. In the time of Alfred, these great proprietors alone made up this assembly of wise men, whose functions were as vaguely defined as the number and the periods of their meetings were uncertain, but who thenceforth maintained in England the principle of a national representative assembly, or the institution whereby the country undertakes its own government, which is the foundation and key of English history.

While Alfred was drawing up laws of an equitable and merciful character, while he was rebuilding the ruined convents and churches, and erecting new ones, he did not forget the poorest and most unhappy of his subjects. Slaves were numerous in England, and suffering under a heavy yoke. The king provided for their protection, granting to them the right of enjoying and transmitting to their heirs whatever goods they might have acquired; he even applied in favour of Christian slaves the Biblical law, granting to them their freedom at the end of six years of servitude. In his will he ordered that all the serfs on his entire domains should be emancipated. His example was followed: the serfs and the emancipated slaves became day by day more numerous, and began thenceforth to form in England the lower middle class, which did not yet exist anywhere upon the Continent.

So many efforts and so much foresight must necessarily have proceeded from a great and enlightened mind. Alfred had

neglected nothing in order to add to his stock of knowledge. He had not studied during his childhood, in spite of his ardent desire to acquire knowledge, for there were no intellectual resources at the court of King Ethelwulf. The ancient kind of erudition which had already been remarkable in England, where the means of study, at the beginning of the eighth century, were far superior to anything of the kind which could be found upon the Continent, had become extinct during the wars with the Danes. "When I began to reign," wrote Alfred the Great in the preface to his translation of the Pastoral of Gregory I., "very few people on this side of the Humber could say their daily prayers in English, or could explain in English a Latin epistle, and I suspect that there was not a greater number on the other side of the Humber." It was thus that, notwithstanding his eagerness to instruct himself, Alfred had arrived at the age of thirty-six years without understanding Latin, and he only began the study of it in 884, after having made prodigious efforts to secure [illegible] who were to instruct himself and his people. In the [illegible] embassies, presents, negotiations, he spared no trouble in order to attract John, the old Saxon of the monastery of Corbie; Grimbald, monk at Saint-Omer; and Plecmund, a learned Mercian, who had taken refuge in a solitary island of the county of Chester during the Danish wars, and whom he made archbishop of Canterbury; finally, he invited the monk Asser, living at the extremity of Wales, in the convent of St. David, and whom he soon secured, not only as a master, but as a friend. It is to Asser that we owe a biography of Alfred, so minute in its details that it proves beyond question the great intimacy which existed between the monarch and the historian.

Alfred was looking about in all parts for learned men, and was studying Latin like a schoolboy; but he understood that the period of purely classical education had passed away. His childish taste for Saxon poetry had not been obliterated, and his reverence for his native tongue stimulated him to spread education among those of his subjects who were not in a position to devote themselves to the Greek and Latin languages. "It has

appeared to me very useful," he wrote to Bishop Wulfsege, "to choose a certain number of books, those which it is most important to render easily accessible to all, and to translate them into the language which we all understand. We shall thus easily insure, with God's help, and if peace continues, that all the youth of this nation, and particularly the young men of rich and free families, shall apply themselves to the study of letters, and shall not sacrifice their time in any other exercise than that of learning the Anglo-Saxon writers. The masters shall then teach the Latin language to those who shall wish to know more, and to attain a higher standard of instruction. After having reflected upon the nature of this instruction, I have chosen the book which is called in Latin *Pastoralis*, and which we call *The Book of the Pastor*. The learned men whom I have around me explained it to me, and when I fully arrived at the precise meaning of it, I translated it into Anglo-Saxon, [illegible] literally, sometimes taking only the thoughts, and wr[illegible] in the manner which appeared best in order to make the[illegible] comprehensible, and I have sent a copy of the work [illegible] bishop in the kingdom."

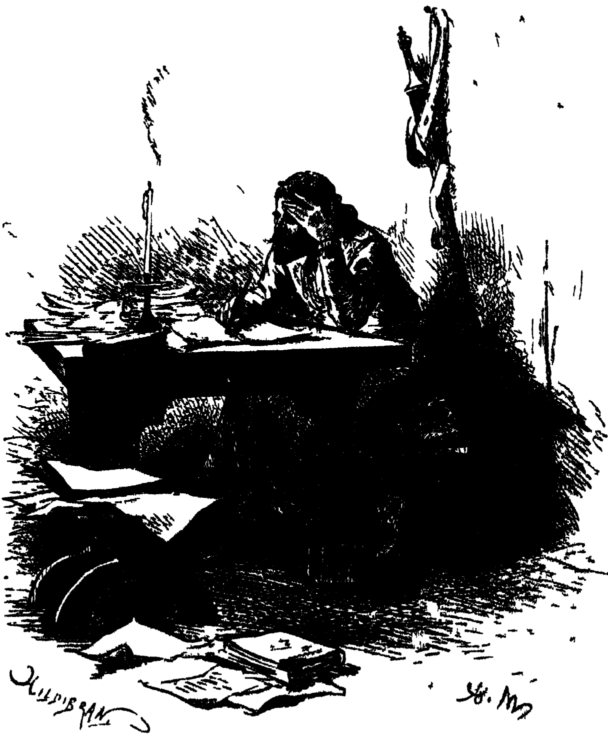
After having begun this great work of clothing in a scarcely formed language the beauties of classical literature, Alfred did not remain idle. Impossible labours have been attributed to him; a translation of the entire Bible; the revision of a portion of *The Saxon Chronicles*, &c. It is positively known, however, that he translated, besides *The Pastor*, long fragments of *The Soliloquies* of St. Augustine which he called *Culled Flowers*; *The Ecclesiastical History* of Bede; the historian Orosius; and the book of Boethius on *The Consolation of Philosophy*. There even exist of his, some poems, translations or rather imitations of the verses which Boethius had scattered throughout his book, and which Alfred often altered to suit his own taste and the tastes of the race of men for whom he was writing.

How can such great tasks, which would have sufficed to fill up the lifetime of an author, have been accomplished during that of a king whose reign was partly taken up by his wars

against the Danes? The good order which prevalled in all the undertakings of Alfred can alone answer this problem. Subject to violent attacks of sickness, loaded with work and with cares, he had divided his time into three parts: the first belonged to his regal duties; the second to his religion, to prayer and study; the third was devoted to his repasts, to sleep, and to bodily exercise; but the portion allotted to sleep was very short. The king was often awake during a great portion of the night, and having neither a clock, nor a sand time-measurer, he was struck with the idea of having some tapers or candles made, which should burn for a certain time, and by means of which he should be enabled to count the hours. Unluckily, however, a gust of wind would sometimes penetrate into the royal tent and make the candles burn too rapidly, and then the king would suddenly lose all means of reckoning the time, until the sun came to give him its infallible direction.

His strength was quickly consumed in this struggle against human weakness. When scarcely fifty-two years of age, Alfred was dying. He sent for his son Edward: "Come and stand beside me," he said; "I feel that my last moment is near; we must part. I am going to another world, and you will be alone with all my riches. I beg you, for you are my beloved child, strive to be a good master and a father to your people. Relieve the poor, support the weak, and apply yourself with all your might to the redress of wrongs. And then, my son, govern yourself according to your own laws; then the Lord will help you and will grant you His supreme reward. Invoke Him that He may advise and direct you in your difficulties, and He will help you to accomplish as well as possible your designs." It was in the same manner that, three hundred and fifty years later, when dying upon the shore at Tunis, St. Louis recommended his son to France. Great kings and great Christians both, although very different in character and ideas, Alfred and St. Louis both deserved the name of "pastors" of their people, which the gratitude of Englishmen has accorded to Alfred.

He died on the 20th of October, 901, after having reigned twenty-nine years, and he was interred at Winchester, in the monastery which he had founded there. It is not there, but at Wantage—at the spot where he was born—that the grateful memory of England caused the celebration of the jubilee on the occasion of the thousandth anniversary of the birthday of Alfred the Great. On the 25th of October, 1849, a vast concourse of people went to Wantage to do honour to the memory of a king so much beloved. The assemblage decided on the publication of his complete works, a monument less durable than the gratitude graven by his deeds on the heart of his people.





CHAPTER IV.

THE SAXON AND DANISH KINGS.—THE CONQUEST OF ENGLAND BY THE NORMANS (901—1066).

ONE hundred and sixty-five years elapsed between the death of Alfred and the Invasion of England by William the Conqueror. Two dynasties reigned during that period in England: first, the Saxon, which numbered ten sovereigns, and secondly, the Danish, which was represented by four princes. The first of the Saxon kings, Edward, the son of Alfred, did not enjoy a very brilliant reign, but contrived to make his authority recognized, with the help of his sister Ethelfleda, widow of Ethelred, the viceroy of Mercia. He drove back the Danes into their territory, a portion of which he conquered, and, at the death of his sister, he annexed Mercia to his states, which he left thus augmented, to his son Athelstan, when he died, in 925.

This young prince was brave as well as able. He placed the Welsh tribes, always ripe for revolt, under subjection, and imposed upon them an annual tribute of gold, silver, and cattle;

he repelled the people of Cornwall, who had never been thoroughly subjected by Alfred. But the Danes had not accepted their defeat. King Olaf, who was established in Northumbria, and who had recently pushed his conquests so far in Ireland as to capture the town of Dublin, ascended the Humber with more than 600 vessels: the Scots at the same time attacked the frontiers, and the Britons from Wales once more revolted. So many enemies rising suddenly did not daunt Athelstan. He triumphed over his opponents: five Danish kings remained on the soil, as well as the king of Scotland's son. They all retired into their territories, there to remain until the end of the reign of Athelstan, whose court attained a degree of luxury hitherto unknown to the Saxon kings. It was there that Louis d'Outre-Mer took refuge when driven from France, and it was thence that he was recalled to the throne at the death of Charles the Simple. All England recognized the laws of Athelstan, and he had taken the title of king of the Anglo-Saxons, instead of the less assuming one of king of Wessex, when he died in 940, at the age of forty-seven years, leaving the throne to his brother Edmund. The reign of the latter, like that of his brother Edred, presents nothing remarkable with the exception of a series of battles with the Danes, who were sometimes daring and victorious, and sometimes beaten and repulsed. At the death of Edred, in 955, the Danes of Northumbria were apparently almost entirely subjected; their chiefs had lost the title of kings, and their territory was governed by an earl chosen by the Saxons. The progress had been great since the time of Alfred.

Young Edwy, the son of Edmund, was only fifteen years of age when he succeeded to the throne. The Danes left him in peace; but he commenced a struggle against the clergy of his kingdom, enemies more powerful than the "Sea-Kings." He had married Elgiva, a young and beautiful princess whose family was related to his own within the degree of kinship prohibited by the Church, and he refused to abandon his wife, as also to submit to be reproved by the archbishop of Canterbury,

Odo, who was supported by the famous abbot of Glastonbury, Dunstan, renowned throughout England for his austere mode of living. On the occasion of the coronation of the young king, Dunstan, being annoyed, retired during the banquet. Edwy flew into a passion, and threats were so quickly followed by action, that Dunstan was obliged to make his escape and was immediately pursued by the emissaries of the king, who were instructed to burn out his eyes.

Archbishop Odo, however had remained in England at the head of the austere party of the Church. The disagreement between the king and the clergy was growing more and more serious, when a revolt of the Danes took place in Northumbria and extended into Mercia. Soon afterwards Edgar, a younger brother of Edwy, until then king of Mercia, was declared the independent sovereign of the two provinces. Family afflictions assailed the young king at the same time: his wife had been seized in one of his castles by a wandering band of soldiers, and carried to Ireland, where her beautiful face had been disfigured by red-hot irons. Dunstan had just reappeared in England after a short period of exile, at the time when the young queen, who had been tended and looked after by the friends whom she had made in Ireland and had now recovered from the effects of her disfigurement, was returning to England to rejoin her husband. She was stopped, however, near Gloucester by her implacable enemies, who no doubt credited her with a fatal influence over her husband. She was so cruelly mutilated by them that she died a few days afterwards. Edwy survived her but a short time, and died at the age of nineteen in 958. The beauty of his personal appearance had gained him the title of Edwy the Beautiful.

When Edgar ascended the throne of his brother Edwy, Dunstan shared it with him, and whatever may have been the part played by him in the events of the last reign, the authority of the king bore, in the hands of the monk, the fruits of order and justice. The Danes, attached to young Edgar. who had been brought up amongst them, submitted voluntarily to his

authority. Their territory was divided and placed under the rule of several earls; the fleet, greatly augmented, kept the "Sea-Kings" in constant fear, and the young sovereign of England, assisted by his able minister, who had become archbishop of Canterbury, traversed his state every year, presiding at courts of justice and gathering around him the principal chiefs of each province. Ardent and ambitious, Dunstan was at the same time of a firm disposition and character; his practical knowledge was as conspicuous as his religious zeal. He was one of that great race of priests, whose influence, pre-eminent in the middle ages, was the source of much good and evil alike, until the period when the magnitude of their pretensions and the abuse of their power brought about the great revolt of the Reformation. It was under King Edgar that the Welshmen saw their annual tribute of gold and silver commuted for an annual presentation of three hundred wolves' heads, a measure which insured the destruction of these ferocious animals, who were very numerous in England.

King Edgar, who was under the authority of Dunstan, contrived, however, sometimes to escape from his influence and to indulge in all kinds of excesses; but the archbishop on such occasions would reprove him severely. He imposed upon him as a penance, for a serious transgression, the disuse of his golden crown during a period of seven years—a severe punishment for the vain Edgar, who dearly loved to bestow upon himself titles as pompous as those of the Oriental princes. Death soon put an end to this penance. Edgar died in 975, leaving two sons. The elder, Edward, who succeeded him, had been born of his first wife; the younger, Ethelred, was the son of the beautiful but treacherous Elfrida, for whom the king had conceived a violent passion, and whom he had married after the death of her husband. Edgar was even accused of having wilfully killed the latter in the hunting-field.

Whatever crime may have been committed by the king in order to gain the hand of Elfrida, the expiation fell to the lot of his children. From the commencement of his reign, the young

Edward, although supported by Archbishop Dunstan, sat very insecurely upon his throne, which was undermined by intrigues in favour of his brother Ethelred. Three years after his accession, Edward was hunting one day in Dorsetshire, when he conceived the fatal idea of paying a visit to his brother, who was then residing in Corfe Castle. It may be, that on his arrival he was struck with a terrible presentiment at the sight of his step-mother Elfrida, for he refused to dismount, and asked only for some refreshment in order to drink to the health of the queen. A goblet was brought to him; but, while he was carrying it to his lips, a dagger was plunged in his back. His body quivered with agony, and the horse, alarmed, rushed away, carrying across the forest the body of the young king, held fast by the stirrups. When the body was found, it was disfigured by the shrubs and the stones of the roads, and the long fair hair of the martyred king were clotted with blood and dirt. Queen Elfrida had accomplished her object, but not without trouble; for the young Ethelred, grieved at the death of his brother, burst in tears, which irritated his mother to such a degree that he nearly fell a victim to her blows. There remained no other heir to the throne: Dunstan and his friends decided, not without some reluctance, to recognize the claims of the son of Elfrida; but in crowning him, Dunstan, it is said, gave utterance to some sinister predictions concerning the misfortunes which threatened his reign, and it was he who gave to this young king that title of "careless," which the latter seemed only anxious to justify.

For several years the Danes, who were established in England, seemed to have identified themselves with the Saxon race; the invasions of the Norsemen had ceased, occupied as they were with devastating the coasts of France, which were but badly defended by the feeble Carlovingians. But a new dynasty was about to be established in France, more powerful and more warlike than the descendants of Charlemagne. Already the Danes began to return to their old habits, and to turn their vessels towards the English coasts. The son of the king

of Denmark, Prince Sweyn, resolved to seek his fortune in foreign lands. A band of bold adventurers gathered round him, and after several little preliminary expeditions, they landed in 991 on the coast of East Anglia, between Ipswich and Maldon. They hoped to find friends there among the Danes who had formerly settled in that territory; but Earl Brethnolte who was in command there, although a Dane by birth, remained faithful to his new country and religion; he fought valiantly against his brothers from across the seas, and was killed in battle. King Ethelred became frightened; he sent offers of money to the Norsemen. The latter accepted ten thousand pounds of silver which they stowed away in their long vessels; and carrying with them the head of Count Brethnolte, they started to return to their own country. But the plan of defence, so often resorted to by the Carlovingian kings in France, was a sure means of bringing back the "Sea-kings" the following year. Soon Ethelred found himself compelled to establish a regular tax which was known as "danegelt" (Danish money), and which served to pay the ever-increasing tribute exacted by the pirates. In 993, the Danes of Northumbria and of East Anglia rose up to support their countrymen in invading the country. Sweyn had become king of Denmark, and had the whole forces of that country at his command. In 994 his ships appeared off the English coasts, accompanied by the vessels of Olaf, king of Norway, his ally. The invaders encountered no resistance from the king, nor any serious opposition from his subjects. Silver was again offered, but this time, as though to lessen the humiliation of the treaty, the Saxons demanded the conversion of the Danes to Christianity. Sweyn did not hesitate to accede to this: he caused himself to be baptized, a ceremony which was considered very unimportant by the majority of the pirates, some of whom openly boasted that they had been washed twenty times in the baptismal water. But Sweyn's ally, King Olaf, who was sincerely touched, and moved, no doubt, by the grace of God, made a vow never to return to invade England, and kept his promise. Sweyn

reappeared alone the following years. In 1001 the Danes overran the country, from the Isle of Wight to Bristol, without meeting with the slightest resistance. The price of their withdrawal that year amounted to twenty thousand pounds of silver.

The Danes had disappeared; but the unlucky king of England had become involved in fresh difficulties, through his quarrels with Richard, duke of Normandy. A fleet was being raised against him on the Norman coast when Richard died, leaving to his son Richard II. the burden of carrying on the war. The interference of the Pope put an end to the quarrel, which was followed by the marriage of Ethelred with the Countess Emma, sister of Richard, who was called the "flower of Normandy." Ethelred already had six sons and four daughters by his first wife.

The young queen had just arrived in England, and the rejoicings were scarcely at an end, when a prolonged cry was heard throughout the country. Either by a spontaneous movement, or in consequence of secret orders, the Saxons had risen in every direction and had slaughtered the Danes who were established in their midst, and whose reiterated insults had become unendurable. "A Norsemen is equal to ten Saxons," the Danish lords haughtily said; but the ten Saxons united had triumphed over the Norsemen. Taken by surprise on the 13th of November, St. Brice's Day, "women, old men, and children, good and wicked, big and little, pagans and Christians," succumbed under the effects of the popular hate and revenge. The sister of King Sweyn, Gunhilda, who had embraced the Christian faith in order to marry Palric, Earl of Northumbria, a chief of Danish extraction, saw her husband and children murdered before her eyes, and afterwards encountered the general fate herself. "My brother will drown your country in blood when he revenges me," she exclaimed when dying.

Gunhilda had not been mistaken. Already the news of the crime which had been committed in England had spread to Denmark; an immense fleet was being prepared. The Norse-

men, actuated this time by their thirst for revenge as well as by their natural love of plunder, were gathering eagerly round their king; not a serf, not a freedman, not an old soldier was admitted into this chosen band; the freemen, in the flower of their youth and strength, alone had the privilege of avenging their brothers slaughtered in a foreign land.

The ships of the Sea-kings were resplendent with the golden and silver ornaments with which they were decked, from prow to stern, when the Great Dragon, with King Sweyn on board, was the first to land, in the neighbourhood of Exeter. The defence of the town had been entrusted to a Norman, Count Hugo, who had come from France with Queen Emma. He betrayed King Ethelred, and gave up the town to the invaders. Having pillaged and burnt down Exeter, the Danes spread throughout Wiltshire. On arriving at a farm or at a house, or a village, they would order the trembling inmates to prepare a meal; then, having satiated their appetites with meat and mead, they would murder the inmates upon the threshold of their huts, which they would then burn down, and remount their horses to go forth and extend their fearful ravages.

The Saxon king meanwhile was organizing an army; but he had entrusted the command of it to the Mercian Elfric, the chief who had already upon a previous occasion betrayed him, and whose son's eyes had been put out in consequence as a punishment. Arrived before Sweyn and his army, Elfric declared that he was taken ill, and recalling his soldiers, who were prepared for the struggle, he allowed Sweyn to pass with the enormous booty that he was going to place on board his ships before descending upon the Eastern Counties, which all suffered in the same manner. When the Danes returned into their country, in 1004, they were escaping, not from the Saxon arms, but from the famine which their ravages had brought upon England.

In vain did King Ethelred solicit the help of his father-in-law, Richard, the Norman duke; the disdain which he evinced towards his young wife had irritated the Normans to such a

degree that their duke had caused to be thrown into prison all English subjects who happened to be within his dominion. Ethelred therefore found himself alone and a prey to the pirates, who reappeared in 1006 upon the English coasts. England was exhausted. Scarcely had the Danes left a house, after exacting a ransom for each member of the family and for each head of cattle, than the king's collectors would follow in their steps, demanding the sums necessary for paying off the invaders, and imposing a fresh penalty for the punishment of the unhappy wretches who had given money to the Danes.

While the Saxon king was plundering his subjects in order to pay an ever-increasing "danegeld," while the people, exhausted, were writhing under the double extortion of the conquerors and of the legitimate sovereign, an old man was enabled, single-handed, to resist the demands of the proud Danes. The archbishop of Canterbury, Elphege, had for twenty days defended his town against the reiterated assaults of the enemy, when a traitor opened the gates to the Danes. They rushed into the place, mad with anger and thirsting for revenge. They sent for the old archbishop, who had not sought refuge in any hiding-place. He was brought forth, bound in chains, before their chief, Thurkill. "Buy your life," cried the chief, touched with compassion. "I have no money," the archbishop calmly replied. The Danes were beginning to close round him. "He is a servant of God," said Thurkill; "perhaps he is poor." And he suggested a small sum as ransom for the archbishop. "Prevail upon your king to collect together the value of all his property, so that we may leave England," he added. The old man looked at him impassively. "I have not the money which you ask for," he repeated, "and I shall not urge the king to further oppress his people in order to purchase your departure." The eyes of the Dane flashed with anger; he no longer endeavoured to protect the archbishop against his soldiers. But the firmness of the old man had produced a wonderful effect upon them: he was led into prison without suffering the slightest injury. Towards dusk, when he was alone, his brother found a

means of reaching him; he brought the sum fixed upon for the ransom of the archbishop. "No," the latter said, "I cannot consent to enrich the enemies of my country." The Danes came hourly, urging the old man to purchase his freedom: "You will urge me in vain," at last said Elphege; "I am not the man to provide Christian flesh for pagan teeth, by robbing my flock to enrich their enemies." The pirates had lost all patience; it was late; they were already heated with drink; thev dragged the old man out of prison. "Gold, bishop! Give us gold!" they all cried together, and they closed round him threateningly. The old man was silent; he was praying. Hustled, beaten, wounded, the archbishop fell upon a pile of bones, the remains of the rude banquet. His enemies seized these primitive weapons, and he fell under their blows. A Dane, to whom he was still preaching the Gospel an hour before, and whom he had baptized with his own hands, at length took a hatchet and put an end to the old man's agony.

While Elphege was resisting and dying, Ethelred was submitting and paying an enormous sum of money, abandoning at the same time several counties to the Danes. Thurkill settled in England, after swearing fidelity to the Saxon monarch. His conquests excited the envy of Sweyn. In the following year a large fleet appeared in the Humber, and landed near York. This time the invaders planted their lances in the ground or threw them into the rivers, to intimate that they took possession of the soil. The Saxons offered no resistance. Sweyn had overrun all the Midland and Northern Counties, and, leaving the fleet to the care of his son Canute, he marched towards the South. He was stopped near London, where the king had taken refuge, and where the brave citizens stood firm behind their massive walls. Sweyn did not attempt to conquer their town; he turned towards the West, and all Devonshire received him with open arms. He was proclaimed king at Bath. Ethelred was gradually losing the little power which he still retained. He suddenly left London, which surrendered soon afterwards, and he took refuge in the Isle of Wight. From

thence he sent his wife Emma to Normandy with the two sons whom she had borne to him, Edward and Alfred. In spite of his disagreements with his brother-in-law, the Duke Richard received his sister with so much kindness that Ethelred soon followed her, and arrived at Rouen while Sweyn was taking the title of King of England (January, 1013).

Titles are easily taken, but conquests are sometimes difficult to keep. Six weeks after the flight of the Saxon king the Danish king died suddenly at Gainsborough, and the power was slipping from the hands of his son Canute. The nobility and people of England had recalled Ethelred to the throne; they added, however, the words "providing that he will govern us better than heretofore." The king did not rely entirely upon the promises of his subjects. He sent his son Edward to negotiate with the principal chief. When he re-entered London his first care was to declare that no Danish prince could have any pretensions to the throne; but Canute had already been proclaimed king by his army and by the Danes established in England, and the war had recommenced. Ethelred died in the year 1016, in the midst of all this confusion, and at the time when the Danes were preparing to lay siege to London.

Three sons by his first wife yet remained to Ethelred. One of them, Edmund, called "Ironsides," on account of his strength and prowess, had already commanded the armies during the lifetime of his father; he was proclaimed king. But the country was divided; the Danes established throughout the kingdom were powerful and numerous; treason crept even into the most intimate councils of the new king. Twice he delivered London when besieged; he fought five pitched battles, and repulsed on several occasions the Danes, driving them northwards. At length he proposed to Canute that they should decide their pretensions to the crown by the fate of arms in a single combat. Unlike the majority of his race, Canute was not tall, and he was quite unfitted to sustain a struggle against the gigantic stature of Edmund. "Let us rather divide the

kingdom, as our ancestors did before us," he said. The two armies received this proposition with acclamation. The North of England was allotted to Canute, and Edmund contented himself with the South, with a nominal right of sovereignty over the whole kingdom. One month afterwards, the Saxon king was dead, and Canute, convoking the "wittenagemot" of the South, protested that the treaty contained no stipulation in favour of Edmund's heirs. The chiefs declared themselves of the same opinion; the Dane was proclaimed King of all England, and the children of Ironsides were placed in his hands.

Canute had proclaimed an amnesty; but on seizing power, he immediately proscribed all the partisans of Edmund whom he did not put to death. "Whoever brings me the head of an enemy shall be dearer to me than a brother," said he. Many heads were brought to him. The wittenagemot which had until then excluded from the throne all the Danish princes, voted the same sentence against the Saxon princes. Canute, however, had not assassinated the children of Edmund; he sent them to his ally, the king of Sweden; no doubt, with sinister intentions; but the innocence and beauty of his victims touched the heart of the proud Scandinavian: he could not keep them by his side, and he therefore sent them to the court of the king of Hungary, St. Stephen, who received them kindly and brought them up carefully. One of them, Edmund, died early; the second, Edward, subsequently married Agatha, daughter of the emperor of Germany, and we shall see his children reappear in history.

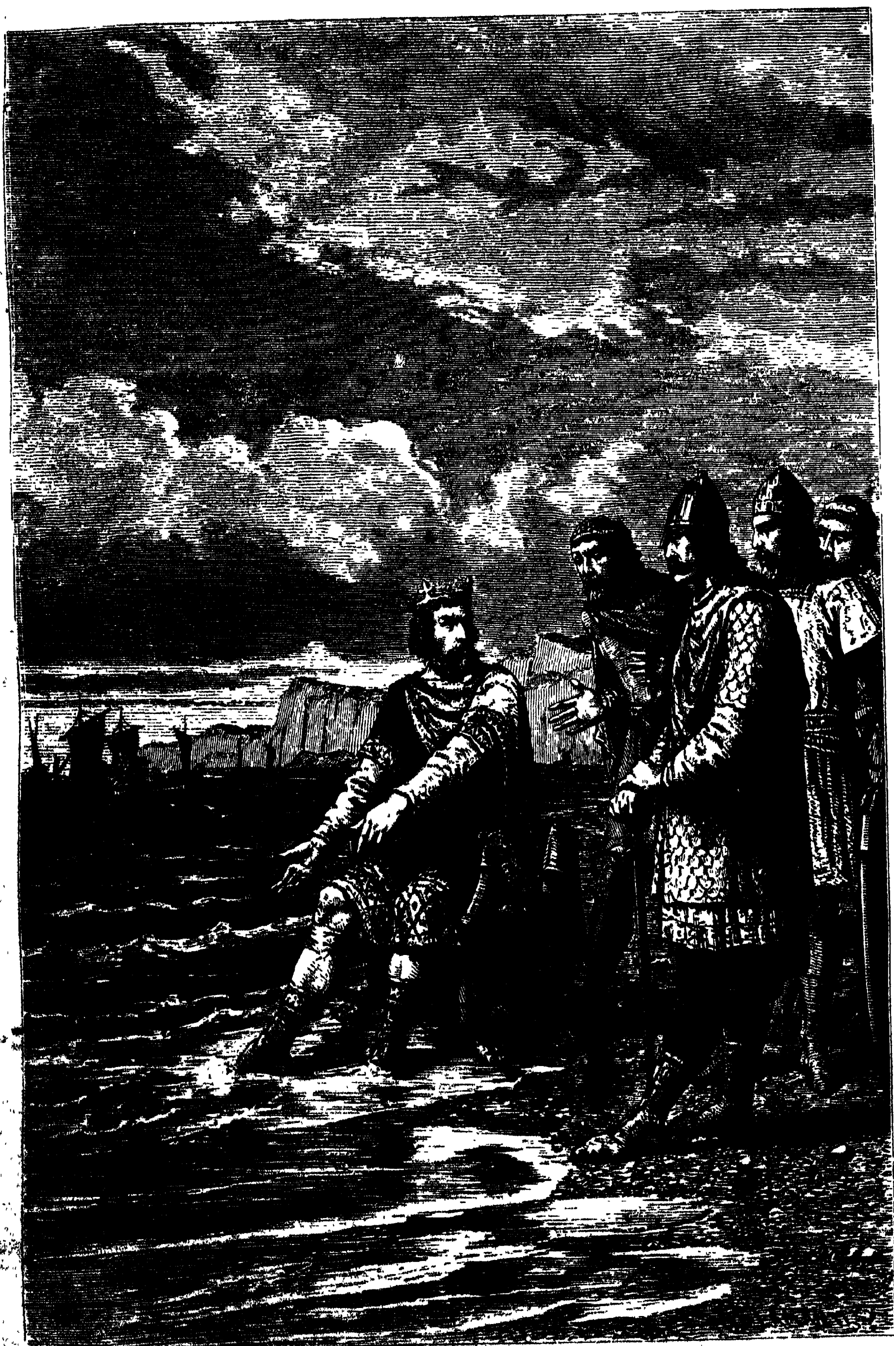
The Duke Richard of Normandy did not protest, in the name of his nephews, against the elevation of Canute; on the contrary, he even offered his sister, widow of Ethelred, in marriage to the Dane. Canute accepted this offer, and the Norman princess found herself placed for the second time on the throne of England, which was so dear to her heart that, in order to reach it, she stifled all her natural instincts. As soon as she had borne a son to Canute, she lost all affection for the children whom she had left in France, and who became more and

more Normans by habit during their prolonged absence from England.

Power has different effects upon different men: it hardens and corrupts some, while it humanizes and exalts others. Canute made good use of his power, and when he was delivered from the enemies whom he dreaded most, his government became less severe and more regular than that of the recent Saxon kings. The English followed their new chief in all his wars, and fought valiantly at his side to secure to him the crowns of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The viceroy of Wales refused to render homage to Canute, whom he treated as a usurper; Malcolm, king of Scotland, upheld the rights of the descendants of Ethelred to the throne of England. The Normans did not lend any help in these demonstrations, and Canute triumphed over the Welsh and the Scotch.

The influence of the Christian religion was slowly but surely producing a good effect on the fierce Danes. Sweyn had been baptized, but he had afterwards sunk again into pagan practices. His son constructed churches and monasteries, and made a solemn pilgrimage to Rome, on foot and with a wallet on his back, to obtain forgiveness for the crimes which he had committed. Already, in the midst of a warlike life, a sense of justice seemed to have developed itself in his soul: he had been guilty of killing a soldier in an outburst of passion; he descended from his throne, convoked his chiefs, and asked them to impose a penalty upon him. All remained silent. The king insisted, however, promising not to be offended. The chiefs left it to his own discretion, and Canute condemned himself to pay a fine of three times as much as the sum fixed by the Danish law, as the penalty for murdering a soldier, adding at the same time nine golden talents as compensation.

Having returned to England after his pilgrimage to Rome and a journey to Denmark, Canute applied himself to the administration of the laws which he had promulgated. "I will have no money acquired by unjust means," he had said in a letter to Archbishop Elfric. The latter portion of the reign



THE SEA STILL CONTINUED RISING.

of the Dane was not characterized by any crime or act of oppression. Canute had learnt that there was a tribunal above to which he owed respect and submission. One day as his courtiers were over-rating his power, the king ordered that his throne should be placed upon the margin of the sea. The tide was rising: Canute, seated on the beach, ordered the waves to stop in their onward course. "Ocean," he said, "the earth upon which I sit, is mine; you form a portion of my dominions; do not rise as far as my feet; I forbid you." The sea still continued rising; it was already bathing the king's mantle, when he turned to his flatterers. "You see," he said, "what human power is compared to that of Him who says to the sea: 'Thou shalt go no further.'" And, depositing his golden crown in the cathedral of Winchester, he refused thereafter to wear that emblem of sovereignty.

Canute died in 1035, leaving three sons: Harold and Sweyn, born of a Danish mother; and Hardicanute, son of Princess Emma. He had divided his states among his children, leaving England to Harold, Denmark to Hardicanute, and Norway to Sweyn. These two last princes already, no doubt, exercised some authority in their dominions, for both were in the North when their father died. But England was wont to have a voice in questions of succession, and Canute left behind him a powerful favourite, who was inclined to further the interests of Hardicanute. This favourite was Earl Godwin, a nobleman of Saxon extraction, formerly but a simple herdsman in the county of Warwick. During the struggle between Edmund and Canute, a Danish chieftain, named Ulf, had lost his way in a forest, in the evening after a battle. He had walked in vain all night when, at daybreak, he met a young countryman who was driving a herd of cattle. "What is your name?" asked the Dane. "I am Godwin, son of Ulfuoth," said the young man, "and you are a Danish soldier." The warrior hesitated. "It is true," he said at length. "But could you tell me the way to my countrymen's ships, on the sea coast?" Godwin shook his head. "He is a very foolish Dane," he said, "who expects

a favour from a Saxon." And he hurried on his cattle. Ulf insisted. "There are many of my countrymen close to us," replied the herdsman; "they would spare neither me nor you if they should meet us." The chieftain silently offered him the heavy golden ring which he wore on his finger. Godwin looked at him. "I will accept nothing from you," he said; "but I will try and show you the way."

They came to Godwin's hut. He invited the Dane in. "Remember," said the herdsman's father to the Dane, "that he is my only son, and that he sacrifices his safety for you. Try and find employment for him at your king's court." Ulf promised to do so, and kept his word. Canute took a fancy to the young Saxon, who had attained the rank of governor of a province when the king died. He immediately declared himself in favour of the son of Emma, who was not so thoroughly Danish as his brothers. Leofric, governor of Mercia, took up the cause of Harold, in common with all the Northern chiefs. The town of London followed their example. War was about to break out; but the Wittenagemote convoked at Oxford allotted all the provinces North of the Thames to Harold; and those on the South, to Hardicanute.

While Queen Emma and Godwin were thus striving to secure the power for the young king of Denmark, the latter lingered in his Northern possessions, and had not yet set his foot in England. His Norman brothers, sons of Ethelred and Emma, had been more prompt. Scarcely had the news of the death of Canute reached Normandy, when the elder of the two princes, Edward, who subsequently became Edward the Confessor, landed at Southampton with a few ships. But Queen Emma's natural affection was confined to her son by Canute: she raised the country against her eldest child, who was obliged to retire precipitately. His ill-success did not discourage his brother Alfred, and, the following year (1037), the two princes received a letter, coming, it was said, from their mother, urging them to come secretly to England, where the people were anxious to have a king of Saxon origin to rule over them. Alfred immediately embarked

for England, followed by some troops from Normandy and Boulogne. He landed in the neighbourhood of Herne Bay. Godwin had come to meet him and appeared friendly; but, either from premeditated treason, or from annoyance at seeing the strangers who accompanied the prince, Godwin altered his mind, and took Alfred to Guildford, lodging the Normans in the houses of that town. In the dead of night, while the little band of soldiers were asleep, Harold's soldiers surrounded Guildford; the Normans were made prisoners, Godwin meanwhile not appearing on the scene to defend them, and a fearful massacre took place at daylight. Six hundred men, it is said, were slaughtered in cold blood, and the unhappy Alfred was dragged to London, from whence Harold sent him, bound hand and foot, to the isle of Ely. He appeared before a Danish council of war, and was condemned to have his eyes put out, as a disturber of the public peace. He died a few days afterwards. Harold soon sent Queen Emma into exile, and Godwin having sworn allegiance to him, he was proclaimed king of all England, not, however, without some dissatisfaction on the part of the Saxons. The archbishop of Canterbury, Ethelnoth, who was a Saxon, refused to crown him. Depositing on the altar the royal emblems, he exclaimed: "I will not give them to you. I do not forbid you to take them, but I refuse to bestow my benediction upon you, and no bishop shall consecrate your throne." It is said that, thereupon, Harold seized the crown, and placed it upon his head with his own hands. Some chroniclers state that he subsequently found favour with the archbishop; but the Dane was more than half pagan; he had abandoned the Christian Church. When divine service was being celebrated, when the bells were ringing, and the priests were mounting the altars, he would let loose his dogs, and start for the forest to enjoy the pleasure of hunting or racing; a fondness for which pastimes won him the name of "Harefoot." He died in 1040, at the time when his brother Hardicanute had just repaired to Flanders, where Queen Emma had taken refuge, to consult her preparatory to attempting an invasion of England. Soon after-

wards an embassy of Danish chieftains and English counts came unsolicited and offered him his brother's throne. He thereupon came to England with his mother.

Hardicanute, like his predecessors, was thoroughly Danish by nature; he gave himself up to the pleasures of the table, surrounding himself at the same time by the chieftains whom he had brought over with him from the North; despising and oppressing the Saxons, from whom he still exacted danegelt, as in the old times of the invasions. He had attributed his brother's misfortunes to Godwin; but the count had been able to justify himself before a council, in spite of public opinion which condemned him. The presents which he had offered to the king had had the effect of putting an end to the prosecution. Hardicanute had accepted from him a magnificent ship covered with burnished metal, ornamented with gold, and manned by eighty warriors furnished with every kind of weapon. By degrees power had returned entirely into the hands of Godwin and Emma, when, in 1042, Hardicanute, at a banquet, fell a victim to the excesses of every kind to which he was accustomed.

The Saxon earl had resolved to deliver his country from the Danish yoke. He immediately sent for Prince Edward, who was still in Normandy, and was more a monk than a prince. The popular feeling in his favour which enabled Edward to return to England, was shared and fostered by the very man to whom he attributed his brother's death; but the new king was powerless and a stranger in the country which recalled him after an exile which he had endured during nearly the whole of his lifetime. He dissembled and accepted the hand of Edith, daughter of Godwin, a good and gentle princess who "was born of Godwin as the rose is born in the midst of thorns," the chroniclers say. Edward was always cold towards her, and he manifested something more than coldness towards Queen Emma. He could not forget how she had repulsed him, and how she had failed to do anything to defend her son Alfred—even if she had not actually allured him to his ruin. He ordered her to

remain within her domains, which had been greatly reduced, and refused to see her any more.

The power which Edward had regained was, however, scarcely more than nominal. The "Great Earl," as Godwin was called, had exacted the value of his services. He and his six sons held possession of nearly all the South of England. Besides this, his rival, Earl Leofric, was all powerful in Mercia. Siward held the whole of the North, from the Humber to the frontiers of Scotland. Happily for the king, all these chieftains were opposed to each other. Edward took advantage of their rivalries, trying from time to time to redress the wrongs of the people, who were oppressed and deprived of all power. But in vain did he suppress the danegelt; in vain did he inspire an almost superstitious veneration towards himself in his subjects by reason of the austerity of his life: the English never forgave him for the affection which he manifested towards the Normans and his preference for them, which induced him not only to surround himself with the friends of his younger days, but to lavish all the favours on them which he had at his disposal. The king's ordinary conversation was carried on in the Norman language; he dressed in Norman fashion; he raised to clerical dignities the Norman priests who had come over with him, and thus contrived to excite considerable jealousy in the people, all which increased the influence of Godwin.

An event happened which caused their animosity to break out openly. Eustace of Boulogne, the brother-in-law of King Edward, who had married the latter's sister, the Lady Goda, landed in England with a numerous suite of troops from Boulogne and Normandy. He was received in a very friendly manner by the king, and loaded with presents. He was returning home, when, on arriving at Dover, some of the inhabitants resisted the action of the strangers in unceremoniously taking up their quarters in the town. Eustace's soldiers, greatly incensed, killed those who closed the gate at their approach. The whole town rose against them in consequence of this act; they were beaten and routed. They took refuge in Gloucester,

where King Edward was staying, who ordered Earl Godwin to impose a punishment on the inhabitants of Dover. Godwin told the king to inquire into the affair. Edward, however, summoned Godwin to appear before him. The earl was in no hurry to do so. Uneasy at the king's projects, he began to raise troops throughout his dominions, and his son Harold did likewise. Godwin soon found himself at the head of a considerable force. The king summoned to his aid Leofric, Count of Mercia, and Siward, Earl of Northumbria. These two great rivals of Godwin immediately advanced with an army; but the old hatred between the Danes and the Saxons had almost worn itself out. The soldiers from the North considered themselves English as well as those from the South, and they all murmured at the idea of coming to blows. It was agreed to lay the subject before the Wittenagemot; but, in the meanwhile, before the meeting of the assembly, Godwin's soldiers, who were nearly all volunteers, were slowly dispersing, while the king had collected together a numerous army. When the Wittenagemot began to sit, the earl and his sons were summoned to appear and establish their innocence. They hesitated, however, being unwilling to trust to the impartiality of the judges; and, in consequence of the decision which was come to in their absence, they were banished, driven from England within five days, and condemned to have all their goods confiscated. Godwin, his wife, and three of their sons sought refuge at the court of Flanders. Harold and his brother Leofwin fled to Ireland. Edward consigned to a convent the only person of Godwin's family remaining in England, Queen Edith. "It is not advisable," said the Norman courtiers, "that she should live in luxury and with wealth at her command, while her relations are suffering from such misfortunes."

Delivered of the ambitious and powerful Godwin, Edward was beginning to feel himself a king in reality. He took advantage of this to surround himself with those persons only who were personally devoted to him. Among others whom he wished to see at his court was the Duke of Normandy, William

the Bastard, as he was called, his mother being the daughter of a tanner at Falaise. Edward was still an exile in Normandy, when the Duke Robert, William's father, conceived the idea of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to obtain forgiveness for his sins. These expeditions were of frequent occurrence among the Normans. The barons represented, however, to the duke that it would be inexpedient to thus leave his dominions without a ruler. "By my faith," answered Robert, "I will leave you no lord! I have a little bastard son who will grow up, please God; select him in the meanwhile, and I will appoint him my successor afterwards." The Normans did as the duke proposed, "because it suited them to do so," the chronicle says, and all the chiefs came, one after the other, and placed their rough hands between those of the child, swearing allegiance to him.

But scarcely had the duke, his father, started than the murmuring began. The Normans were proud, restless, unmanageable; it was repugnant to their feelings to live under the dominion of a child and a bastard; a war soon broke out; the partisans of young William carried him off, but the King of France came to their aid. When the child had reached manhood he soon manifested rare courage and a strong and ungovernable will, as well as that ambitious disposition which was destined to make the fortune of himself and his partisans. He was twenty-seven years old when he came to England in 1050 to the court of King Edward.

He might almost have imagined that he was not really out of his dominions; a Norman was in command of the fleet near Dover; Norman soldiers were in possession of a fort near Canterbury; and as he advanced into the country, other Normans, priests and laymen, gathered round him. King Edward received him in a very friendly manner, and made him presents of arms, horses, dogs, and hawks; it is not known whether William was incited by any hint from Edward to claim the inheritance of this rich kingdom which was to be without a master at the death of the king. Edward did not mention it, and the duke could keep his secrets.

He had just returned to Normandy, when Count Godwin appeared upon the coast of Kent with three ships; he had sent some emissaries to his numerous friends, and the entire population had risen in his favour. At the same time his sons Harold and Leofwin, coming from Ireland, joined him with a small army.

The father and his sons sailed round the coast, and everywhere met with followers. When they at length landed at Sandwich, nobody ventured to resist them. King Edward was in London, collecting together his warriors, who came forward very slowly. Godwin's vessels had ascended the Thames and found themselves under the very walls of London. They soon passed the bridge, and landed their troops. The king meanwhile did not stir.

Godwin had arrived at the capital without discharging an arrow or unsheathing a sword; he sent a message to the king in which he demanded the remission of the sentence which had been pronounced against him. Edward was aware of the desperate state of his affairs, but he was incensed at the daring of the earl and refused to listen to his demands. Several other messages were delivered. The king at this critical moment was still surrounded by his Norman favourites. He could not order his vessels to attack those of Godwin, as the former had been seized by the insurgents; but Edward remained inflexible. The Normans who were with him foresaw the issue of the conflict, and feared the vengeance of Godwin. They began to fly. The archbishop of Canterbury, Robert, and the bishop of London, William, mounted their horses and fought their way to the sea-coast, where they embarked. The king at length surrendered; a Wittenagemot was convoked and the sentence of banishment pronounced against Godwin and his sons was annulled and transferred to the Normans, who were in their turn expelled from England. Queen Edith reappeared in her husband's palace. Godwin and his family regained their honours and property. The younger of the sons and one of the grandsons of the great earl were the only hostages given to the king, who

confided them to the keeping of the duke of Normandy. Sweyn, in expiation of his former sins, gave up both his titles and his wealth to perform a pilgrimage barefooted to Jerusalem. He died long before reaching the Holy Land.

Peace seemed re-established in England, but the king still nourished the bitterest hatred against Godwin. The peace would probably not have been of long duration had not the death of the earl, which took place in 1053, put an end to their rivalry. The Norman chronicles relate that he was seated at the royal table, when a servant, accidentally losing his balance, supported himself by leaning against another. "There," said Godwin, laughing, "that is how brother helps brother." "Yes, certainly," said the king, "one brother requires the help of another, and I would to God that mine were still alive." "King," cried Godwin, "how comes it that at the slightest remembrance of your brother, you always look so fiercely at me? If I helped to cause his misfortune even indirectly, may the Lord of Heaven prevent my swallowing this piece of bread." At that moment, while carrying the bread to his mouth, the earl had a fit of choking and fell back "struck down by the hand of Providence." He died a few days afterwards, almost at the same moment as his old rival, Siward, count of Northumbria. The latter was ill and bedridden, when he said, "Lift me up, that I may die standing, like a soldier, and not lying down like a cow; give me my cuirass and helmet, that I may die armed." It is this old Siward whom Shakspeare represents in *Macbeth*, uneasy in his mind, before mourning the death of his son, about the situation of the fatal wounds, and consoling himself amidst his grief with the thought that they had all been inflicted in front and that his son had died like a brave warrior.

The son whom Siward left was too young to succeed him in the government of his vast dominions, which were presented to Tostig, one of Godwin's sons. Harold had all the estates of his father left to him, and although very loath to do so, he gave up the command of the Eastern territories which he had hitherto held, to Elfgar, son of Leofric of Mercia.

King Edward was much attached to Harold, the bravest and best of Godwin's sons; and the English people shared this affection with him. Tostig, on the contrary, soon caused himself to be detested in Northumbria. The people organized an insurrection in 1066, and he was driven from his territories. The king instructed Harold to quell the insurrection, but the latter knew his brother well, and understood the grievances of the people whom he had oppressed. He made proposals to the Northumbrians of a conference for peace, endeavouring at the same time to exonerate his brother and promising that the latter's conduct should be more worthy in future. The insurgents refused haughtily. "A proud and overbearing chief is unendurable to us," they said; "we have learned from our ancestors to live free or die." Harold himself conveyed the message of the Northumbrians to the king, and Morcar, son of Elfgar, was elected in place of Tostig, who took refuge at the court of Flanders.

Edward was growing old, and he had no children. His devotion was becoming day by day more fervent. He thought of making a pilgrimage to Rome, but the Wittenagemot opposed it. For the first time the king thought of his nephew Edward, son of Edmund Ironsides, who was still in Hungary, where he had been brought up. He sent for him. Edward Atheling, as he was called, immediately set out with his wife, daughter of the emperor of Germany, and also with his three children, Edward, Margaret, and Christiana. The English people were delighted. The memory of "Ironsides" had remained popular and his son was received with acclamation. But this was only by the people, for the king, who had sent for his nephew with the evident intention of making him his heir, never saw his face. By reason of some intrigues, probably of Harold, the interview was delayed, and before it could take place the prince died in London, where he was buried, in St. Paul's Cathedral. Godwin's son was rapidly approaching the throne.

For more than ten years, Harold's brother, Wulfuoth, and his nephew Heaco had been in Normandy, entrusted to the care

of the Duke William, as Godwin's hostages. The count conceived a desire to go and set them free. The old king tried to persuade Harold to abandon his project, either on account of his esteem for him or because he had, as some chroniclers say, made a will in favour of the duke of Normandy, and consequently wished to prevent Harold from making his acquaintance. "I will not hinder you," said the king, "but if you go, it is not by my wish, for your journey will assuredly bring down some misfortune upon our country. I know the Duke William and his astute mind; he hates you, and will grant you nothing, unless he sees some advantage for himself in doing so; the way to make him give up the hostages would be to send somebody else."

Harold was young and presumptuous; he did not heed the advice of the old king, but embarked at a port in Sussex near Bosham, with his companions. The wind was unfavourable, and the two little ships were dashed ashore at the mouth of the river Somme, in the dominions of Guy, count of Ponthieu. According to the usage of the time, the crew were taken to the count, who was entitled to claim them, and they were shut up in the citadel of Beaurain, near Montreuil.

Harold had declared himself to be the bearer of a message from the king of England to the duke of Normandy, and William claimed the prisoners; but the count of Ponthieu only parted with them for a ransom. Harold was taken to the duke at Rouen. The latter received the Englishmen magnificently, and at once gave up to them the hostages, only asking Harold to prolong his stay in Normandy. The Saxon consented to do so, finding ample amusement in observing the luxury and civilized customs which he met with for the first time among the Normans.

The Duke William had conferred upon his guests the spurs of knighthood, and he proposed that, in order to enable them to display their prowess, they should accompany him on an expedition into Brittany. As long as the war lasted, Harold and William lived under a single tent and dined at the same table.

On one occasion, after the Saxons had distinguished themselves by their warlike feats, the two chiefs were returning home together on horseback. William was speaking of his old relations with King Edward. "When Edward and I lived like brothers, under the same roof," he said, "he promised me, that if ever he should become king of England, he would make me heir to his kingdom. Harold, help me to get this promise fulfilled. If by your help I should obtain the kingdom, rest assured that whatever you ask for, I will immediately grant." Harold, astounded, did not know what to answer. He stammered a few words. William was resolved to get his consent. "Since you consent to serve me, you must undertake to fortify Dover Castle," he said, "to construct a well there for obtaining a supply of spring water, and to surrender it up to my soldiers. You must give up your sister to me, whom I will give in marriage to one of my barons; and you shall marry my daughter Adela. I also wish that, when you go, you would leave one of the two hostages whom you have claimed; I will take him back to England when I go over there as king." Harold shuddered inwardly. He was at the duke's mercy, and he agreed to all that he desired, mentally resolving not to fulfil his promises. He did not know the Norman and his farsighted schemes.

They were at Avranches (some say at Bayeux), and the Norman barons were convoked in a great assembly. The Saxon was there by the side of the duke; a mass-book was brought and placed upon a stool covered with a golden cloth. Suddenly William exclaimed, "Harold, I call upon you, before this noble assembly, to confirm on oath all that you have promised to do to help me to obtain the kingdom of England after the death of King Edward." The Englishman was again taken aback, and was in great peril. He advanced slowly, and swore with his hand on the book, to perform the promises made to the duke, provided that he were alive and that God should help him to do so. All the Normans cried out, "May the Lord help him!" Then, at a sign from William, the rich cloth was removed and the Saxon discovered that he had sworn upon a receptacle filled



THE ENGLISHMAN SWORE WITH HIS HAND ON THE BOOK.

with precious relics which had been brought, by order of the duke, from all the neighbouring convents. William did not detain Harold any longer. He left the country, taking his nephew with him; but his brother remained in the power of the Normans.

"Did I not warn you that I knew William?" said the old king Edward when Harold related to him what had happened; and he added sadly, "May none of these misfortunes happen in my lifetime!"

The death of the king was destined to be the signal for England's misfortunes to recommence, and he was becoming weaker every day. Sinister reports had been circulated. Old prophecies were recalled which threatened England with invasion and subjugation by a foreign people. The king himself, constantly occupied with his devotional practices, saw fearful visions in his dreams and would cry out, with a vague remembrance of biblical imagery, "The Lord has stretched His bow, He has unsheathed His sword; He moves and brandishes it like a warrior; His wrath shall be manifested through fire and by sword." His servants shuddered at these threatening prophecies; but the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stigand, only laughed. "Dreams of the sick old man," he would say.

It is said that, before dying, Edward designated Harold to the members of the Wittenagemot as his successor; other chroniclers (the Norman writers) maintain, on the contrary, that when Harold and his relations presented themselves in the king's chamber, the latter said in a feeble whisper, "You know, my thanes, that I have bequeathed my kingdom to the duke of Normandy; do I not here see men who have sworn to uphold his rights?" Whatever the dying man may have wished, the opinion of the English chiefs was not to be mistaken. Scarcely had Edward the Confessor been buried in Westminster Abbey, which he had built in place of performing the pilgrimage to Rome, when the Wittenagemot proclaimed as king of England, Harold, the son of Godwin, and grandson of the herdsman Ulfuoth, overlooking in his favour the rights of Edgar Atheling,

son of Edward Atheling, and grandson of Edward Ironsides, as well as the more formidable pretensions of the duke of Normandy.

Harold's first care was to eradicate from the kingdom all traces of the Norman innovations introduced by King Edward; the ancient Saxon signature replaced, in the acts, the seals introduced from Normandy, and the Norman favourites whom Edward affectionately protected to the last, were deprived of their offices, though without being exiled or having their property confiscated. It was through them that the Duke William heard of the death of Edward and of the election of Harold. He was in a park, near Rouen, trying a new bow, when the important news reached him. He stopped immediately, gave his bow to his servants and went back to Rouen. He walked up and down the great hall in his palace, sat and rose alternately, and was quite unable to remain still. His friends looked at him in silence without daring to accost him. At length one of them, who was on more familiar terms with him than most of the others, approached him. "My lord," he said, "of what use is it to keep your news from us? It is rumoured in the town that the king of England is dead and that Harold has taken possession of the kingdom, unfaithful to his plighted word to you." "That is true," answered the duke, "and my grief is caused as much by the death of Edward as by the wrong which Harold has done me." "There is no remedy for Edward's death," replied the Norman, "but there is for Harold's infidelity; yours is the willing arm and yours are the willing soldiers; a thing well begun is half done."

William's courtiers were not the only persons to advise him to support his pretensions by force of arms. Harold's own brother, Tostig, who had been driven from Northumbria, and whom his brother had failed to re-establish in his government, came from Flanders to offer his help to the duke of Normandy in attempting the conquest of England. William was too prudent to undertake the invasion without premeditation; he presented ships to Tostig, who went to Denmark to seek the

support of King Sweyn. Upon meeting with a refusal from the Dane, Tostig repaired to Norway. The king of that country was Harold Hardrada, son of Sigurd, a great voyager and corsair, who had formerly extended his excursions as far as the seas of Sicily, and who on one occasion on his return had married a Russian princess. He was a poet and would sing on board his black vessel, laden with his warriors, who were a source of great terror to all peaceful people. Tostig approached him with flattery. "The whole world knows," he said, "that there is not in the North a warrior who is your equal; you have only to wish it, and England is yours." The Norwegian allowed himself to be seduced and promised to put to sea as soon as the ice should thaw and make the ocean navigable.

While Tostig was trying his strength on the coast of Northumbria with a band of adventurers, William, careful to have on his side all the appearances of right, sent a message to Harold as follows:—"William, duke of Normandy, reminds you of the oath which you swore with your own lips and with your hand upon good and holy relics." "It is true," answered Harold, "but I swore under constraint, not being free, and I promised what did not belong to me; besides, my services belong to my country, and I could not give up my position to anybody else without its consent, nor marry a strange woman. As to my sister, whom the duke claims for one of his chiefs, she died during this year. Does he wish me to send her body to him?" A second message, still calm and moderate, urged Harold at least to marry the Norman princess; but the king answered that he would not do so, and soon afterwards he chose a Saxon wife, a sister of Edwin and Morcar, the two sons of Elfgar, count of Mercia. William's anger at length burst forth, and, reproaching Harold bitterly for his perjury, he declared that he would come before the end of the year to exact payment of the whole of his debt and to pursue the perfidious Saxon even into the places wherein he considered his hold to be firmest. While awaiting the help of his allies from the North, William was aware of the importance of conciliating public

opinion in Europe, or at least in that portion of Europe where the people were not altogether ignorant of what was happening in England and in Normandy. No influence was stronger than that of the Church for obtaining the goodwill of the people. The English were not in favour at Rome. They had refused to receive Robert of Jumièges, a Norman priest, brought up in Canterbury by Edward the Confessor, who had been appointed to a high position by the Pope, and the Saxon Stigand, who was still under excommunication from Rome, under pretence that he had been guilty of simony, was chosen in his stead. The Saxon Church had often shown itself to be somewhat undisciplined, and the clergy had been accused of laxity in performing their duties. William caused these facts to be represented at Rome, besides employing many other arguments. He had sent Lanfranc there, a priest of Italian extraction, whom he had made abbot of St. Stephen's at Caen, and who by reason of his clever and prudent mind was enabled to render important services to his master. Harold had sent no ambassador to this tribunal, whose jurisdiction he did not recognize in temporal affairs; his perjury was strongly denounced there, and Pope Alexander II. declared that William of Normandy, cousin of King Edward, and consequently his heir, could legitimately style himself king of England and seize upon the kingdom. The king received this permission sealed by the Pope, with a holy standard and a ring containing a hair of St. Peter enclosed in a diamond.

Strong in the support of the Pope, to whom he had promised to place England again under the authority of the Holy See and to cause the Peter's pence to be levied there annually, as Canute had done, William began his preparations for the conquest. The Normans were a free people; they were still conscious of their rude origin, but nevertheless accustomed to be consulted in their own affairs. The duke called together all his most intimate friends, his two maternal brothers, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, Count Mortaign, and the friend of his childhood, William, son of Osbert, the seneschal of Normandy. All encouraged him in his project. "But," they said, "you must ask

help and advice of the majority of the inhabitants of this country, for it is right that whoever pays should be invited to consent to the expenditure."

William was hot-tempered and haughty, but prudent and sensible. He convoked at Lillebonne a great assembly of men from every state of Normandy, the richest and most esteemed of their class. He unfolded his plans to them, and they retired to discuss them at their ease, out of the presence of the duke.

The excitement was great and the opinions various. William, son of Osbert, appeared in the midst of the groups. "Why do you discuss together?" he exclaimed. "He is your lord, and he has need of your services; your duty would be to make offers to him, and not to wait until he asks for anything. If you fail him, and he attains his object by the will of God, he will not forget it; show, therefore, that you love him and support him with a will." Low murmurs were heard; the opposition was beginning to burst forth. "No doubt he is our lord," they said; "but is it not enough for him that we should pay his taxes? We do not owe him any assistance for his foreign excursions; he has already oppressed us too much by his wars; if his new enterprise should fail, our country would be ruined." The offers accordingly were few, when Osbert's son was instructed to communicate them to William.

The assembly re-entered the room wherein the duke sat. The seneschal advanced. "Sire," he said, "I do not think that there are in the world men more zealous than these. You know how many burdens they have already borne for you? Well, they propose to add another, and to follow you to the other side of the sea as they do on this side. Push onward, then, and fear nothing; whoever has hitherto only supplied you with two good soldiers on horseback is willing to bear double the expense." The seneschal was interrupted by a hundred voices, crying "We did not commission you to make such an answer as that. Let him remain in his own territory, and we will serve him as we should do; but we are not compelled to help him to conquer another people's country. Besides, if we

were for once to do him this service, he would expect it as a right ever afterwards, and would thereby oppress our children; it shall not be." And the assembly dispersed in anger.

The duke sent for the noblemen, one after the other, as well as the abbots and the merchants: he showed his plans to them, asked for their support as a personal favour which should not compromise their liberty in any way in future, and by degrees he obtained what he wanted. The merchants promised vessels and armed warriors, the pri sts gave money, and the barons placed themselves and their vassals at his disposition. The preparations began forthwith in all the Norman towns; adventurers were everywhere crowding round William, "who slighted nobody," according to the chronicles, "and was always ready to oblige people as far as he was able." He promised lands, castles, women, plunder; he even sold an English bishopric to a certain Rémi, of Fécamp, for a ship and twenty warriors.

While the noise of hammers was resounding throughout all the shipyards of Normandy, the ice had thawed in the Baltic, and Harold Hardrada had set sail with his sea-serpents; he had been joined by Tostig, and had ascended the Humber and the Ouse, causing great destruction on his way. A certain number of Englishmen had rallied round the standard of Tostig. Edwin and Morcar marched to oppose the allies, but they were repulsed with loss. The citizens of York, fearing an assault, promised to surrender. The Norwegians were already celebrating the victory in their camp.

It was in the early morning, and Hardrada and Tostig, with a small body of troops, were advancing towards York to hold an interview with the chiefs of the town. Counting upon the terror which they inspired among the peaceful citizens, they were but half armed; Harold Hardrada had left his halbert in his tent, and wore a blue tunic embroidered with gold and a helmet ornamented with precious stones. Suddenly a cloud of dust, which was rising in the horizon, cleared away and revealed a forest of lances. It was King Harold whom the invaders believed to be in the South watching the movements of the

Duke of Normandy, and who had come by forced marches to encounter them. The golden dragon of Wessex was displayed on his standard.

The position of the Norwegian, Hardrada, was critical, but his courage did not desert him. Planting in the ground his banner, the motto on which was "The despoiler of the world," he drew up around it all his forces at the foot of Stamford Bridge; he was riding backwards and forwards in front of his soldiers, when his horse stumbled and he fell. "A good omen!" he cried when he saw the faces of the pirates darken. His soldiers, resting their lances on the ground, with their points in the direction of the enemy, awaited the onslaught of the English. Hardrada was marching along the ranks, singing an improvised "skald." "Let us fight," he said, "let us march, although without any breast-plates beneath the edges of the blue steel; our helmets glisten in the sun; they are sufficient for brave warriors."

The English were contemplating these valiant preparations. A small band of men had detached themselves from the body of the army. "Where is Earl Tostig, son of Godwin?" asked one of the warriors clad in steel. "He is here!" cried Tostig himself, stepping out from the ranks. "Your brother salutes you," rejoined the Saxon; "he offers you peace, friendship, and your former honours." "This is a sensible offer," said Tostig, "and if my brother had made it a year ago he would have spared the lives of many brave men. And what does he offer to my noble ally, King Harold, son of Sigurd?" "Seven feet of English soil," haughtily replied the warrior, contemplating the Norwegian's huge person; "a little more, perhaps, for he is taller than most men." "Then," cried Tostig, "my brother, King Harold, may prepare for the fray. It shall not be said that the son of Godwin abandoned the son of Sigurd."

The Saxons retired slowly. Tostig was still looking fixedly at his antagonist. "Who is the warrior with such a proud tongue?" asked Hardrada. "King Harold, son of Godwin," said Tostig. "Why did you not tell me so?" cried Hardrada;

"he would not have lived to boast of having defeated us." He then added, "He is little, but he sits firmly in the saddle." At the same moment, King Harold was asking his companions whether this gigantic warrior clad in blue was really the formidable sovereign of the seas. It is the same, they told him. "He is a powerful man," replied Harold thoughtfully, "but I think his good fortune has deserted him."

The battle began, Hardrada was killed almost immediately by an arrow which stuck in his throat. Tostig took command of the army. Harold sent proposals for peace a second time for Tostig and the Norwegians. "We will owe nothing to the Saxons," cried the Norwegians, and the struggle recommenced. Tostig was killed in his turn, and great havoc was made among his men. The "despoiler of the world" was now surrounded but by a small number of warriors. They at length pulled up their precious standard, and slowly, defending themselves step by step, they regained the road leading to their vessels. A stout Norwegian had taken up his stand upon Stamford Bridge, covering the retreat of his comrades. They had nearly all passed the bridge, taking with them young Olof, son of Hardrada, when an English soldier, pushing his lance through a crevice in the timber, killed the valiant defender. The Scandinavian vessels unfurled their sails, and returned to Norway to spread the sad news of a defeat, indicated beforehand by the gloomy predictions of the soldiers, who had seen in their dreams a woman of gigantic stature seated on a wolf, and rushing along their ranks, making at each step a fresh corpse for the ferocious animal to devour.

Harold did not attempt to pursue the Norwegians on sea; he was recalled southward by the near approach of his great peril. William had assembled all his forces on the coast of Normandy, almost without any foreign help. The king of France, Philip I., had refused to give him any assistance, although the Duke had proposed to do homage to him when he should obtain possession of England. "You know," the French barons had said to the king, "how little the Normans obey you

now; they will obey you still less if they conquer England, and if they fail in their enterprise, having assisted them we shall make enemies of the English people for ever afterwards."

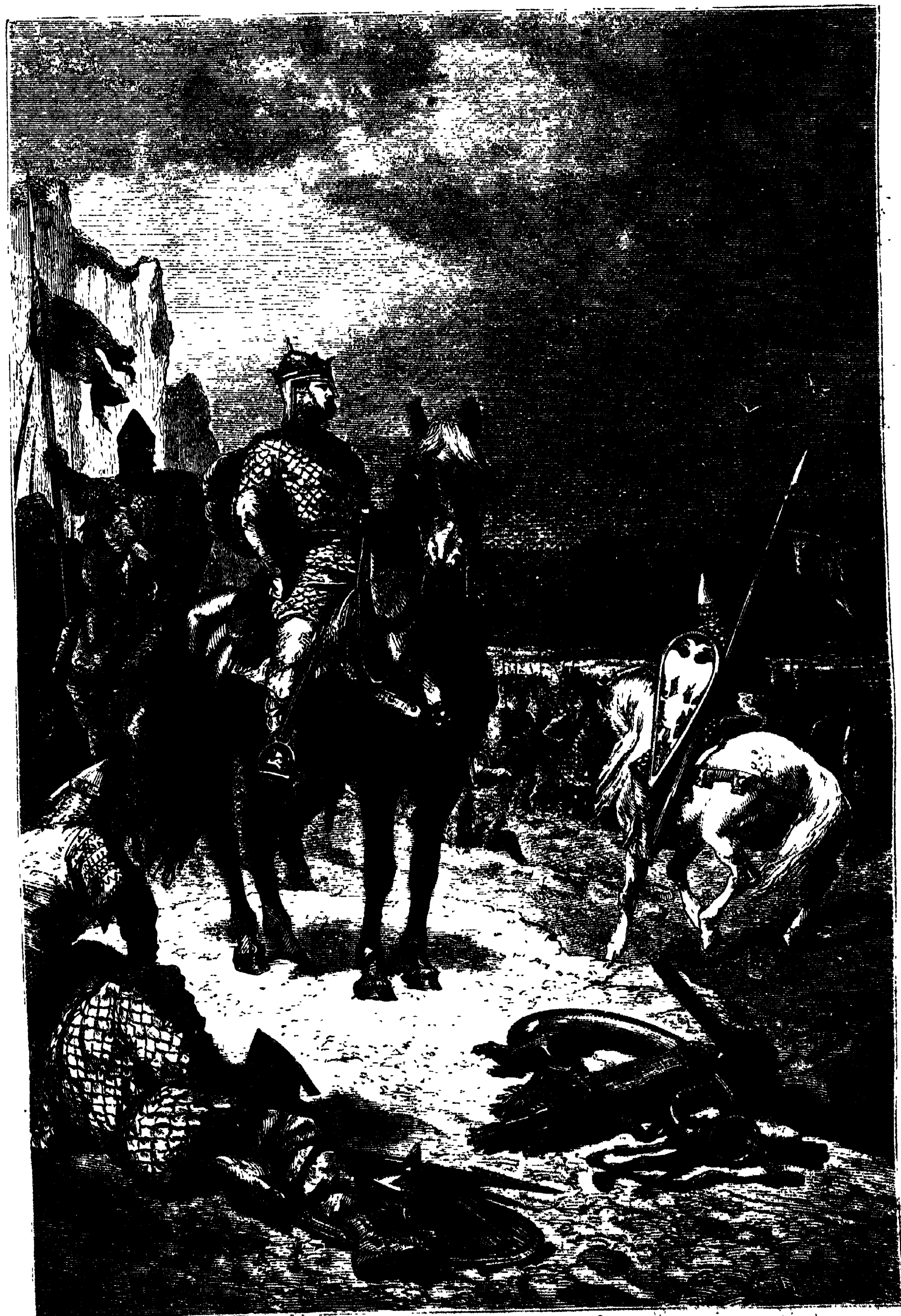
The fleet and the army had been lying together for more than a month at Dive; the wind was unfavourable, and it was impossible to sail out of port. The south wind at length rose, and drove the vessels to Saint-Valéry-en-Caux, and then the bad weather began again. Several ships were dashed to pieces and their crews perished. In the army the men were murmuring. "There has been no fighting," they said, "and yet there are already some men killed." The Duke caused the sands to be watched, in order that the dead bodies thrown up by the sea might be buried immediately; and he allowed good cheer to his soldiers to induce them to wait patiently. He sent for the relics of the wrecks from Saint-Valéry, which were carried through the camp with great pomp. At length a propitious wind arose; all the sails were unfurled, and four hundred large ships and a thousand transport vessels sped away from land. The Duke's ship was at the head of them, bearing on the foremast the banner sent by the Pope; the sails of various colours were flying in the wind. The Duke's vessel soon left all the others behind; at daybreak he found himself alone. He sent a sailor to the foremast. "I only see the sky and the sea," cried the sailor; but a short time afterwards he reported four vessels in sight, and the Duke had not taken his breakfast before a forest of masts and sails was discovered.

It was a fine morning, on the 28th of September, 1066. Harold's vessels, which had been cruising along the coast during a whole month, had put in to land on the previous evening, being short of provisions. The fleet of the Normans approached, therefore, without resistance, and landed in Sussex, at Bulverhithe, between Pevensey and Hastings. The archers landed first, then the horsemen, and lastly the pioneers carrying their tools and wood ready prepared for making trenches round their camp. The Duke was the last to set foot on English soil, after superintending the disembarking of his men. Immediately

upon stepping down, he stumbled and fell, smearing his hands with dirt. A shudder ran along the ranks. "What ails you?" cried the Duke, who had instantly sprung to his feet. "I have seized the land with my hands, and by the grace of God, throughout its length and breadth, it is yours." They were reassured at these words; a camp was at once planned and fortified with wooden trenches, after the French fashion, and bands of soldiers over-ran the neighbourhood, ravaging and laying waste the country.

Harold was still at Stamford, resting after the fatigues of the campaign against the Norwegians, when a messenger in an exhausted and breathless condition, burst into the room where he was at supper. "The enemy," he cried, "the enemy has landed." Harold rose, for daybreak had arrived. He knew William and the Normans sufficiently well to feel confident that the struggle would be fierce and prolonged.

Time was precious. Harold was accustomed to make forced marches, and he accordingly started for London, ordering on his road all the earls and free men to rally round his standard. The whole country rose at his command and large forces were being organized in different parts. "In four days the Saxon will have a hundred thousand men at his side," William was informed by one of those Normans formerly established in England during the reign of King Edward, who served him as spies. But some time was necessary to bring together these confused masses of men and to assemble them at a given point. Harold, in his haste, had not given them time to do so. He had arrived in London; his mother Gytha found his army worn-out and very small for opposing so formidable an enemy. "Do not risk a battle, my son," she said; "let the Normans pursue their ravages in the country, and famine will rid you of them." Harold trembled with indignation. "Would you have me ruin my kingdom?" he said. "By my faith, it would be treason; I prefer to put my trust in the strength of my arm and the justice of my cause." His young brother, Gurth, persisted, for the oath made to the Duke William weighed upon his



WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR LANDING IN ENGLAND.

conscience. "Either under constraint, or by your own free will," he said, "you swore, and your oath will paralyze your arm during the conflict. We have promised nothing; leave us to defend the kingdom. You shall avenge us if we should be killed." Harold smiled bitterly at the remembrance of the Duke's perfidy, but he was inflexible, and he started the same day for Hastings with a force very much less than that of William.

King Harold's first idea was to suddenly attack the enemy, who had been intrenched during a fortnight in their camp; but the Normans were well defended; their trenches had been skilfully constructed, and the Saxon therefore abandoned his project, and, selecting also a strong position upon a hill near Hastings, he fortified it in the fashion of his country with a line of stakes of about a man's height, and with a rampart of latticed branches which was to protect the bulk of his army when the first line should have passed outside the stakes to defend the approaches to the camp.

Harold was uneasy; very few troops had had time to join him, and the Norman army was as strong as it was well disciplined. He, however, laughed aloud when three Saxon spies, who had penetrated into William's camp, came and informed him, that having been recognized and taken over the camp by order of the Duke, they had seen more priests than warriors in the Norman army. They had mistaken for priests all the warriors who had closely-shaven faces and short hair, for the English at that time wore long flowing hair and long moustaches. "All these priests are good warriors," said the king, "and you will shortly see them at work."

William did not yet begin the attack. A Norman monk presented himself in Harold's camp. "The Duke William makes three proposals," said he; "first, to give up your kingdom to him; secondly, to submit his claim to the arbitration of the Pope; or, lastly, to decide the quarrel by single combat." "I will not give up my kingdom, I will not put the matter in the hands of the Pope, and I refuse the challenge

to fight," replied Harold curtly. The monk returned to the Norman camp; but he soon reappeared, bearing another message: "If you will not be faithful to your compact with him, the Duke will allow you to keep possession of all the country north of the Humber, and will give to your brother Gurth the land which was formerly held by Godwin. If you refuse, you are a perjurer and a liar, and all who fight for you shall be excommunicated by the Pope."

The Saxon chiefs looked at each other; but the love of liberty was stronger than their religious fears. "The Norman has given away everything beforehand to his soldiers," they said, "both land and goods. Where should we go, if we should lose our country?" And they resolved to die fighting to the last.

The night of the 13th of October, 1066, was passed very differently in the two camps. William's strict discipline only allowed religious music or devotional practices. After the fashion of the ancient Saxons and of the Danes, whose blood had become mixed with theirs, the English soldiers were eating, laughing, and singing warlike songs. At daybreak, after holy mass had been celebrated, the Normans issued from their camp. They were divided into three bodies, all preceded by archers. The duke was mounted on a Barbary horse which he had brought from Spain. He bore on his neck, in a golden casket, one of the relics upon which Harold had sworn the oath, as a silent witness of the latter's perfidy. By his side a young cavalier, Toustain le Blanc, was holding up aloft the standard sent by the pope. Odo, bishop of Bayeux, was marching through the ranks mounted upon his great white horse, and wearing a breastplate and helmet.

"See how well he rides," said the Normans, looking at William. "He is a graceful Duke, and will be a graceful king." And they advanced joyfully behind him.

At seven o'clock the attack on the Saxon camp began. Taillefer, the knight-minstrel of the Norman army, was marching in front, singing the song of Roland. The Normans cried,

"Our Lady, help us!" The monks who had come with them to the field of battle had retired to pray.

Three times the Normans were repulsed. It was noon. In spite of the arrows of the archers, which inflicted great losses on the Saxon, and one of which had destroyed Harold's left eye, the English camp held good at all points. The duke's horse had been killed during an assault; a rumour had gone forth that William was dead; but, immediately taking off his helmet, and showing himself bareheaded to his affrighted soldiers, he cried out, "Here I am! Look at me; I am living, and I will conquer, with God's help." Some were already taking to flight; these he held back with his long lance, and reconducted to the attack on the enemy's camp. All the defenders of the rampart were killed, but the twig hurdles still protected the bulk of the Saxon army. The Normans pretended to fly; the Saxons rushed forth in pursuit of them, and were all killed. The remainder could no longer resist; the Normans therefore beat down the barrier and entered sword in hand.

Around Harold's banner, his chosen warriors had formed themselves into a compact circle, the "ring of death" as the Danes called it. Harold was there with his two brothers, Gurth and Leofwin. The fight recommenced furiously between the Normans and these brave men; not one of them receded; the heaps of bodies of the slain Normans formed a rampart for them, when twenty of their foes advanced together. They had sworn to cut a passage through the English or to perish to a man. Ten of them fell, but the ranks of the Saxons remained unbroken. William rushed to the attack, followed by his best warriors. The English soldiers were dying at their posts, immoveable as the oaks in their forests. Gurth was dead, Leofwin was dying, bathed in blood, and Harold alone was still fighting at the foot of his banner. At sunset he fell, in his turn, and the standard of the pope replaced the golden Dragon of Wessex. All the English earls were stretched upon the field of battle, and the few Saxons who still remained were slowly retreating; yet so dauntless were they, even in defeat, that the

Normans did not dare to disperse while it was still dark. Eustace of Boulogne, speaking to Duke William, was struck down by an unexpected blow.

On the morrow, at daybreak, Godwin's widow, whom William's pretensions to the English crown had deprived of four sons, came and asked permission to take away the bodies of her relations. Gurth and Leofwin had fallen together at the foot of the banner. No one could find the body of Harold. His own mother could not distinguish him, but was obliged to send for "Swan-necked" Edith, whom her son had loved. Edith pointed to a body covered with wounds and disfigured by sword-thrusts. "That is Harold!" she said. He was borne with his brothers to Waltham Abbey, where he was buried beneath a stone bearing simply this inscription: "Infelix Harold."





CHAPTER V.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NORMANS IN ENGLAND 1066–1087.

KING HAROLD was dead, but England was not subdued. The Wittenagemot had already reassembled in London to choose a new leader for resistance to the invasion. The sons of Harold were still children; and in accordance with a passion for hereditary right remarkable in a country which had often rejected that principle, the popular assembly chose Edgar Atheling, a grand-nephew of Edward the Confessor, to receive the perilous title of king of England. But Edgar was young, his intellect was feeble, and the chiefs who surrounded him were haughty and undisciplined. Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury, was still endeavouring to organize the army, with the assistance of the Earls Edwin and Morcar, when the approach of the Normans rendered it necessary to make an immediate effort. After leaving Hastings, near which town he afterwards built Battle Abbey, the Conqueror had begun his march upon London. The city was well defended:

after a slight attack William set fire to Southwark, and, spreading his troops over the country, pillaged the domains of all the thanes assembled at the Wittenagemot. He enclosed the capital in a circle of fire and plunder which raised fears of a famine. Edwin and Morcar, as well as the Saxon prelates, had already begun to lose courage. The reinforcements expected from the distant provinces were stopped by the Normans. William was at Berkhampstead, still threatening London. An embassy was despatched with a view to conciliate him. Soon afterwards the young king Edgar and all his counsellors, including Stigand, Edwin, and Morcar, presented themselves before the Norman—the king to renounce his empty title, the earls to swear fidelity to the conqueror. The duke received them affably: he promised in his turn to govern with mildness, in accordance with the ancient laws, and raising his camp at Berkhampstead he advanced towards London. For a moment he had appeared to hesitate with regard to the opportunity for his coronation; but his barons urged him to take the title which he had won at the point of the sword, and William voluntarily allowed himself to be guided by them, though only consenting to stay in London after he should have built a fortress for his residence.

He had need to defend himself: for at every step the hostility of the people over whom he sought to rule displayed itself energetically. On arriving at St. Alban's the Normans found the way obstructed by a number of large trees thrown across the road. "Who has done this?' inquired William angrily. "I," replied the Abbot of St. Alban's, presenting himself before him; "and if others of my rank and profession had done as much, you would not have advanced as far as this." The conqueror did no harm to the proud abbot; but on the day of his coronation, he surrounded Westminster Abbey with battalions of his Normans before entering beneath its majestic roof, attended by his barons and by the Saxons who in a small number had rallied round him. Stigand had submitted; but he had refused to crown the usurper. This duty, therefore, fell upon the Arch-

bishop of York, Aldred, a prudent man, who was able to discern the signs of the times. At the moment when the duke entered the church the acclamations of the bystanders were so noisy that the Normans posted outside, believing that they were fighting in the sacred edifice, rushed into the neighbouring houses and set them afire. The cries of the inhabitants, the clatter of arms, frightened in their turn the spectators of the ceremony; they hurried in a crowd to the door, hastening to get out, and William soon found himself almost alone in the church with the priests and some devoted friends. The coronation ceremony, however, continued, and when the Duke of Normandy had issued from the church to appease the tumult he had become king of England. The Normans had dispersed to extinguish the fires or pillage the houses; the Saxons murmured against them under the sombre prognostications of a reign thus inaugurated by fire and sword. William left London almost immediately, and his first measures, mild and conciliatory in their nature, attracted around him a considerable number of Saxon chiefs, to whom he confirmed the title to their domains. A great extent of territory had already fallen into his hands, but the time for dividing the spoil had not yet arrived. In the month of March, 1067, William crossed over into Normandy, having entrusted the government of England to his brother, the Bishop of Bayeux.

Was his object to place in security the treasures which he had acquired, or to give time for insurrections to break out in order to suppress them energetically? Whatever may have been his motives he remained eight months in Normandy, enriching the churches and abbeys with the spoils gathered in England, and conducting through his hereditary states the dangerous subjects whom he had brought in his suite, Stigand, Edwin, Morcar, and the youthful Edgar Atheling.

Meanwhile the Saxons were groaning under the exactions of Odo of Bayeux, and did not confine themselves to groans. The risings became numerous; the inhabitants of Kent had called to their assistance Eustace of Boulogne, who had previously been

the cause of the discontent of the English with Edward the Confessor, and who was now at enmity with the Conqueror. He came; but Dover Castle opposed to his attacks an unexpected resistance, which allowed the Normans time to arrive and repulse him. William had returned to England when, in 1068, the ill-feeling of the population of Devon drew upon that county the attention of the conquerors. The aged Githa, the mother of Harold, was living at Exeter, whither she had carried all her wealth. The fortress refused to receive William and his garrison, offering only to pay the taxes which were wont to be paid to the Saxon kings. "I desire subjects, and do not accept their conditions," said William, who ordered the assault to be commenced. The city was well defended; it resisted for eighteen days. At length the magistrates, less firm than the citizens, opened the gates, and the inhabitants paid cruelly for their obstinacy. Githa, and the ladies of her suite, succeeded in escaping, and in concealing themselves in the little islands at the mouth of the Severn, whence they set sail for Flanders. But scarcely was the outbreak extinguished in the South when it broke forth in the North. Earl Edwin, to whom William had lately refused to give the hand of one of his daughters, as he had previously promised, had withdrawn himself from his court, and the vassals, as well as the friends of the earl, had already gathered around him in Northumbria. The Conqueror at once commenced his march, and entering York took up his position there after expelling the Saxons. While he was pillaging and ravaging the environs the old Archbishop Aldred, whose convoys had been seized, came to make complaint to the king, and reproaching him with the cruelties committed in his name, "Thou art a foreigner, King William," he exclaimed, "yet Heaven desiring to punish our nation, thou hast obtained this kingdom of England at the price of much bloodshed, and I have anointed thee with my own hands. But I now curse thee and thy race, because thou hast persecuted the Church of God and oppressed its servants." Several Normans had already grasped the hilts of their swords; but William restrained them,

and permitted the priest to return in safety into his palace, where he fell sick and died soon afterward.

The capture of York had not discouraged the Northumbrians; they attacked the Normans in Durham, and massacred them in numbers; they had also received important reinforcements. Sweyn, king of Denmark, at the solicitation of the sons of Harold, had sent assistance to the insurgents; two hundred and forty Danish vessels were approaching the coasts. Edgar Atheling, having sought refuge in Scotland with King Malcolm, who had married his sister Margaret, had lately joined the Saxon army and promised support to his brother-in-law. Before the Conqueror was apprised of this new danger York was recaptured by the insurgents, and Edgar Atheling had assumed once more the title of king, which he had formerly laid at the feet of the Norman. But winter came, and William was already assembling his army. Settling hastily the affairs which had called him Southward he took once more the road towards the North, and entered into secret negotiations with the Danes, insomuch that at the moment that he appeared under the walls of York the pirates weighed anchor and sailed again down the coast, pillaging the Saxon villages which the king had abandoned to them before taking again the road towards their country.

Malcolm, the king of Scotland, had now come to the assistance of the insurgents. York was again taken and put to fire and sword. King William then carried his anger and his vengeance into all the counties of the North; not a village which was not burnt, not a domain which was not confiscated. The churches, and even the monasteries found no shelter against Norman rapacity. The inhabitants of Beverley had amassed their treasures in the church dedicated to St. John of Beverley, a Saxon like themselves, who owed them protection. This, however, had no effect on the Normans, and Toutain, one of the battle chiefs of William, penetrated on horseback into the church of the monastery, in pursuit of the fugitives who had taken refuge there. His horse slipped upon the marble pavement of the sanctuary and the horseman was killed. St. John of Beverley had

protected his countrymen, and the Normans withdrew from his abbey. Edgar Atheling had taken refuge again in Scotland; but this time the insurrection had found a true chief. Hereward, lord of Born, a warrior celebrated by his adventures abroad, had intrenched himself in the isle of Ely, which he called the Camp of Refuge, and from all sides the oppressed English gathered around him. William ordered the Earls Edwin and Morcar, who had returned to his court, to be carefully watched. They were apprised of the fact and secretly fled. Edwin was overtaken and slain by the soldiers who pursued him; but Morcar succeeded in reaching the isle of Ely. Thence Hereward undertook expeditions into the surrounding country, and kept at bay all the troops which William sent against him. He even defied Yves Taillebois, one of the king's favourites, whom William had recently induced to marry Lucy, a sister to Edwin and Morcar, and whose intolerable tyranny contributed to maintain the insurrection in the Eastern counties. But King William caused the little isle to be invested, cutting of from it provisions and reinforcements. The monks of the monastery grew weary of that compulsory fast, and indicated to the Normans the points of attack. The Saxons were beaten : the Bishop of Durham and Earl Morcar were taken and cast into prison for the remainder of their lives. Hereward succeeded in escaping, and in maintaining an irregular warfare; but, won over at last by the proposals of William, who sincerely admired his indomitable courage, he consented to lay down his arms. He lived long afterwards upon his domains, which the Conqueror permitted him to enjoy.

The Camp of Refuge was destroyed, and the county of Northumberland was given by William to the Saxon Waltheof, a warrior esteemed by his countrymen, whom William had attached to him by giving him the hand of his niece Judith. Being called away into Normandy in consequence of a rising of the inhabitants of Maine, the king took with him an English army, which fought as valiantly for him as it had against him shortly before. During his sojourn on the Continent he received

into favour Edgar Atheling, who had recently failed in a new attempt instigated by the king of France, Philippe I.; the descendant of King Alfred took up his abode at Rouen, where he passed eleven years of his life in amusing himself with his horses and dogs.

A fresh insurrection recalled William into England. On this occasion it was the Normans themselves who revolted against him. His faithful companion, William FitzOsbern, was dead, and his son Roger, earl of Hereford like his father, had contracted a marriage with the sister of Ralph de Waher, or Guader, a Breton knight, who had accompanied William, and had been created Earl of Norfolk. This union was distasteful to the king, who had endeavoured to prevent it, for he did not like the Bretons. After the nuptials the party was excited: FitzOsbern and Waher spoke of the tyranny of King William, and proposed his overthrow. Waltheof, who was present, had listened, but without taking part in the conspiracy. He had merely promised secrecy; but the secret was betrayed by his wife, who disliked him, and desired to rid herself of her husband. Lanfranc, who had become Archbishop of Canterbury upon the deposition of Stigand, and who was invested with power in the absence of his master, despatched an army against the rebels. The latter had been obliged to declare themselves before their preparations were completed. When the king recrossed the sea the insurrection was already almost suppressed. Waher was banished, together with a great number of Bretons; FitzOsbern was put in prison; the unfortunate Waltheof, who had not taken up arms, but who was a Saxon, son of the glorious Siward, and Earl of Northumbria, was executed, to the great indignation of his fellow-countrymen, who came in crowds to pray at his tomb, and attributed to him numerous miracles. William did not allow Judith to marry the man for whom she had sacrificed her husband. She, on her part, refused the marriage which he offered her; and the king, having stripped her of all her possessions, this wicked woman was reduced to wander sometimes in England, sometimes on the

Continent, bearing with her everywhere tokens of her misery and shame.

Thus ended the great insurrection in England. William was master of the country, and the harsh repressive measures which he had employed at length bore their fruits. The Saxons murmured under the weight of their misfortunes, but no longer dared to revolt. The king, frequently called into Normandy by his quarrels with his eldest son, Robert Curthose, was able now to leave England without anxiety. When he arrived at manhood Robert had called on his father to divest himself in his favour of the duchy of Normandy. "I am not accustomed to throw off my clothing before going to bed," replied William, and Robert irritated, had revolted against his father and endeavoured to arouse against him embarrassments and enemies on all sides. In vain had his mother Matilda, who loved him tenderly, endeavoured many times to reconcile him with his father. Robert could not endure the yoke of paternal authority. He journeyed about the Continent, expatiating on his grievances and squandering the money which his mother sent to him secretly, to the great vexation of William. He received assistance from the king of France, Philippe I., who detested his father, and who installed him in the fortress of Gerberoi, on the confines of Normandy, whence it was easy for him to pillage the neighbouring territory. William besieged Gerberoi. During a sortie Robert found himself face to face with a knight of robust form, concealed by his armour, and having his vizor lowered, with whom he contended for some time. At length he unseated him, and was on the point of despatching his antagonist, when the wounded knight called his people to his aid, and Robert recognized the voice of his father. In spite of his vanity Robert's heart was accessible to generous sentiments. He threw himself on his knees before his prostrate father, entreated his pardon, raised him with his own hands and set him on his horse. A reconciliation followed, for Robert was softened and penitent. But a fresh quarrel soon hurried the son out of Normandy. He set forth bearing with him a malediction which his father never revoked.



HE THREW HIMSELF ON HIS KNEES BEFORE HIS PROSTRATE FATHER.

While the rebellions of his eldest son detained the Conqueror in his Norman domains, his brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, whom he had created Earl of Kent, had made himself detested in England. A brave and able warrior, the bishop had often led to battle the soldiers of William; but he had taken advantage of his influence to oppress the poor Saxons, extorting from them enormous riches. His vast treasures, the grand position which his brother occupied, and the conquests of the Normans in Italy had awakened in the heart of the Bishop of Bayeux the hope of becoming Pope. He had bought a palace in Rome and had sent there a great deal of money; when he resolved to go himself into Italy, and began to make preparations for his journey, gathering around him a number of Norman pilgrims anxious to obtain pardon for their sins by that holy enterprise.

Scarcely, however, had William become cognizant of his brother's project, when he returned from Normandy, and meeting the prelate in the Isle of Wight, caused him to be immediately arrested. Then, reassembling his council, he enumerated before the barons his grievances against the Bishop of Bayeux, his cruelties, his extortions, his secret manœuvres. "What does such a brother deserve?" he asked in conclusion. No one replied. "Let him be arrested," said the king, "and I will see to him." The barons hesitated: William himself advanced towards his brother. "Thou hast not the right to touch me," exclaimed Odo, "I am a priest and a bishop; the Pope alone is empowered to condemn me." "I am not judging the Bishop of Bayeux, but the Earl of Kent," replied William; and having sent him across the sea into Normandy, he imprisoned his brother in a dungeon, to the great satisfaction of the English, who detested him.

William had lost his wife Queen Matilda in 1083; the only softening influence which had tempered that imperious will had disappeared. His two remaining sons, William and Henry, quarrelled with each other: the Danes were again threatening the shores of England, where they could easily have found support, and the English, sullen and subjected, nourished in

their hearts a deep hatred towards the sovereign who had despoiled them, not only to enrich his Norman adherents, but in favour of the stags and deer, "whom (says the chronicle) he loved like his children," and for whose sake he had created or enlarged forests, while he had destroyed towns, villages, and monasteries which interfered with the preservation of game, or the pleasures of the chase, the passion for which he transmitted to his descendants.

It was during these years of doubtful repose that William caused to be compiled the Domesday Book, a complete record of the state of property in England, in repute to this day, and an indispensable labour after a conquest which had resulted in the transfer of nearly all the domains to other hands. William had divided the immense territories of which he had possessed himself into 60,215 fees of knights who had all sworn to him the oath of fidelity. Six hundred great vassals holding directly from the crown had also sworn to him faith and homage as their suzerain lord; and lest their united influence should become dangerous, the king had scattered their fiefs in different parts of the country among their enemies the Saxons. Perhaps unconsciously William had thus obviated the greater part of the inconveniences of the conquest. This was not like the case of a feeble and effeminate people exhausted by oppression as were the Gauls at the moment of the invasion of the Germans. In England, two nations of the same origin and the same religion, equally brave and obstinate, had found themselves face to face. The Saxons were strong enough to resist their conquerors step by step. The Normans could not completely oppress a people always ready to revolt, who had long possessed institutions fitted for developing individual liberty.

Thus compelled to reckon with the conquered, the Normans necessarily acquired by degrees a greater respect for liberty than they had felt under the Norman feudal régime. The persecuted Saxons remained united in order to preserve some power of resistance: the Normans triumphant, but few in number among their enemies, were in their turn compelled to agree together,

that they might not be crushed. Governed by the feudal law, they owed to the king their lord feudal service and certain gifts or dues under definite conditions: the Saxons, who by degrees allied themselves with William, accepted the same conditions on receiving their fiefs, without, however, renouncing the laws peculiar to their race or the rural institutions which the conquerors did not use themselves, and did not always permit to be freely exercised. It was nevertheless to this assemblage of confused regulations, requiring long years to bring them into accord, that the two nations owed the preservation of their strength and their liberties during the fusion which was slowly in progress. In England, as on the Continent, the feudal lords were grand justiciaries upon their lands, but they had acquired the habit of summoning eight or ten of the principal inhabitants of the neighbourhood in testimony to the truth of the facts alleged, according to the ancient Saxon custom, which is the origin of juries. When the criminal could not be found, the parish remained responsible for fines and costs. Thus the Saxons and the Normans came to perform themselves the duties of police and of maintaining order. Instead of succumbing, the liberties of England developed and fortified themselves by the conquest. It was a struggle, but not an oppression.

Meanwhile William the Conqueror grew weary of his inaction. Gloomy and alone, he felt the need of the noise of combat and the excitement of war. Philippe I. had refused to yield up to him the town of Mantes, and a portion of the French Vexin over which he claimed to have right as duke of Normandy. Philippe had even encouraged his barons to make incursions into William's territory. Uniting his Norman barons and his English vassals, whose valour he knew, against his enemies, he crossed the sea in the latter days of the year 1086, to seize by force of arms what the King of France refused to yield to negotiations. On arriving in France, William had been taken ill, and it was not till the month of June that he was at length able to march against Mantes, which he captured and cruelly pillaged. While in the midst of the burning town he was

encouraging his soldiers when his horse slipped. The king was an old man of heavy frame; he fell and was seriously injured. They carried him to Rouen, where he languished six weeks. Remorse now seized him: all the cruelties of his life rose up before him; he endeavoured to expiate them by gifts to the poor and endowments of the churches. His two younger sons were there, anxious to know in what way the king was about to divide his heritage. In spite of his anger against Robert, the king would not deprive him of the duchy of Normandy, where he had been able to make friends. "I leave to no one the kingdom of England," he said, "for I did not receive it as a heritage, but won it by my sword, at the price of much bloodshed. I confide it therefore to the good-will of God, desiring nevertheless that it should go to my son William, who has always obeyed and served me in all things;" and he wrote to the Archbishop Lanfranc, to recommend him to crown his son.

Henry approached his father's bed. "And I?" said he. "Do you leave me nothing?" "Five thousand pounds' weight of silver from my treasury," replied the king, who was now dying. "And what shall I do with this silver if I have neither house nor land?" cried the young man. "Be patient, my son," said the king, "and thou shalt, perhaps, be greater than all." Henry immediately obtained payment of the money and went his way, while his brother William set out for England in order to accomplish his father's wishes by being crowned as soon as possible. The Conqueror was left alone upon his death-bed. It was the 9th of September, 1087. William was sleeping heavily when he was awakened by the sound of bells. "What is that?" he inquired. "The bells of St. Mary sounding the prime," was the answer. "I commend my soul to Our Lady, the sainted Mary, and to God," said the king, raising his hand towards heaven, and he expired. His sons had left him when dying: his attendants abandoned him when dead. A sudden stupor seized on the entire city upon the death of this powerful and terrible ruler. When the monks recovered themselves, and flocked into the royal palace to fulfil the duties of their office,

they found the chamber stripped and the body of the Conqueror almost naked, stretched upon the ground. The king's sons troubled themselves no more with the funeral of their father than they had done with regard to his last moments. His body was conveyed to Caen, and it was a country gentleman named



Herluin who undertook the expenses, from a kind disposition, and for the love of God. At the church of St. Stephen of Caen, which the king had built and endowed, the body of the monarch was on the point of being placed in a grave, when a citizen of Caen, named Azelin, advanced from among the crowd and ex-

claimed, "Bishop, the man whom you have praised was a robber. The ground on which we stand is mine; it was the site of my father's house, which he took from me to build his church. I claim my right, and in the name of God I forbid you to inter him in my ground, or to cover his body with earth which is mine." It was necessary to pay to Azelin the just compensation which he claimed before the body was allowed to be deposited in the grave that awaited it. It was found to be too narrow, and they were compelled to place the coffin in it by force to the great horror of the bystanders, and not till then was the Conqueror able to enjoy in peace the six feet of earth required for his last resting-place.



CHAPTER VI.

THE NORMAN KINGS.—WILLIAM RUFUS—HENRY I.—STEPHEN (1087—1154.)

WILLIAM RUFUS had not yet set sail from Wissant, near Calais, when he received intelligence of the death of his father. He kept the news secret; and took possession of several important places on the pretext of orders which he had received from the deceased king. It was not until he had helped himself freely to the treasures of the Conqueror at Winchester, and had made arrangements with the Archbishop Lanfranc, that he proclaimed the death of his father and his own claim to the crown. The bishop had been careful to administer to the king an oath binding him to observe the laws before consenting to give him his support; but oaths cost little to William. Scarcely had he been declared king by a council of barons and prelates, hurriedly assembled on the 26th of September, 1087, than he violated his original engagements, and cast the Saxon prisoners, whom his father had liberated on his death-bed, again into prisons, together with his Norman captives.

The new monarch would have acted more wisely if he had decided on a directly opposite course. Scarcely had the Bishop of Bayeux and his companions in captivity been set at liberty than they placed themselves at the head of the malcontents. The great barons all possessed fiefs in Normandy and in England: the separation of the two States, therefore, displeased them. Many of them resolved to depose William in order to secure to Robert an undivided paternal inheritance. In consequence of their manœuvres a serious insurrection broke out simultaneously in several parts of England. Robert Curthose had promised to support his partisans with a Norman army, and already some small bodies of troops had put to sea, confident of meeting with no resistance on the part of the king, who was without a fleet. William Rufus took his measures, and called round him that English nation which his father had scarcely subjected. "Let him who is not a man of nothing, either in the towns or in the country, leave his home and come." Such was the proclamation in all the counties according to the ancient Saxon custom. The Saxons obeyed: thirty thousand men assembled round King William, while the merchant ships, already numerous, were cruising in the Channel and destroying, one after the other, the little flotillas which were bringing over the Normans. Bishop Odo had fortified himself in Rochester: the king attacked him there with his Saxon army, and would have compelled him to surrender at discretion, if the Normans who had remained faithful to William had not interceded on his behalf. "We assisted thee in the time of danger," said they; "we beg thee now to spare our fellow-countrymen; our relations, who are also thine, and who aided thy father to possess himself of England." The king consented to allow the garrison to march out with arms and baggage; but the arrogant prelate demanded that the trumpets should not celebrate his defeat. "I would not consent for a thousand marks of gold," exclaimed William angrily, and above the sound of the trumpets arose the cries of the Saxons. "Bring us a halter that we may hang this traitor bishop and his accomplices. O king, why do you allow him to retire thus safe and sound?"

Odo returned to Normandy, Duke Robert negotiated with his brother, and the Saxons had already lost the advantages which William had accorded or promised to them in order to secure their co-operation. Lanfranc was dead: and the oppression had become more burdensome, the exactions more odious since his influence had disappeared. The king delayed long to appoint his successor, taking himself possession of the rich domains and revenues of the diocese of Canterbury in contempt of ecclesiastical pretensions. He had for minister and confidant a Norman priest, Ralph Flambard, whom he had made Bishop of Lincoln, and whose tyranny was so great that the inhabitants of his diocese, says the chronicle, "desired his death rather than live under his power." The hereditary passion of King William for the chase, and the rigour of the forest laws, were among the most frequent causes of persecution. "The guardian of the forests and the pastor of the wild beasts," as the Saxons called him, "took advantage of the least offence against his tyrannical ordinances to crush the thanes, who had preserved some remains of power." Fifty Saxons of considerable influence were accused of having taken, killed, and eaten deer. They denied the charge, and the Norman judges compelled them to undergo the ordeal of red hot iron; but their hands were untouched. When the fact was announced to the king he burst into laughter. "What matters that?" said he; "God is no good judge of such matters; it is I who am most concerned in such affairs, and I will judge these fellows." The chronicle does not say what became of the poor Saxons.

Several times war had broken out between William and his brother Robert. Rufus had conceived the hope of expelling Curthose from Normandy. He had numerous partisans on the Continent, and but for the support of the king of France, and the alliance with his brother Henry, Curthose must soon have succumbed. But in 1096, after a great insurrection in England, and at the moment when King William, triumphant over internal commotions, was probably about to renew his attacks upon Normandy, Duke Robert, seized with a passion for the Crusades,

which were beginning then to agitate Christendom, suddenly proposed to his brother to mortgage his duchy for some years for a large sum of money which would enable him to equip troops and to set out with êclat for the East. The coffers of the king were no better filled than were those of the duke, but he was more skilful in replenishing them at the expense of his subjects. The monasteries and the churches were taxed like the Saxons. "Have you not coffers of gold and silver filled with the bones of the dead?" exclaimed Rufus, and he laid his hand upon the shrines containing the reliques. Robert received the sums agreed upon and set out joyfully for Palestine, while William crossed into Normandy, and without meeting resistance took possession of the duchy, where he already possessed numerous fortresses. Maine alone exhibited repugnance, and a revolt broke out there in 1100 while the Red King was enjoying the chase in England, in the hunting-grounds created by his father, which bear to this day the name of the New Forest. He set out instantly for the Continent. His nobles begged him to take time to assemble his forces. "No, no," replied Rufus, "I know the country and shall soon have men enough," and he jumped aboard the first vessel which he met with, in spite of the violence of the wind. "Did you ever hear of a king being drowned?" he said to the sailors who were hesitating to set sail; and he arrived safe and sound at Barfleur. The rumour of his coming terrified the lord of La Flêche, who was the leader of the insurrection; he abandoned the siege of Le Mans and took to flight. The domains of the enemy were soon ravaged, and Rufus returned to England.

Sinister rumours were circulating among the Saxons with regard to the royal forests. One of the sons of William the Conqueror had wounded himself mortally in chasing the deer in the New Forest. In the month of May, 1100, the son of Duke Robert, on a visit to his uncle, was killed there by an arrow. People said that Satan appeared to the Normans and announced the sinister end which awaited them; but the Red King continued to devote himself to the chase.

It was the 1st of August. He had passed the night at Malwood Keep, a castle used as a hunting-seat in the very heart of the forest. His brother Henry, with whom he had become reconciled, was with him. A numerous suite accompanied him, among whom was one of the private friends of William, a great hunter like himself, one Walter Tyrrel, a French nobleman, who possessed large estates in Poix and Ponthieu. During the night the king had been agitated by terrible dreams: he had been heard to invoke "the name of Our Lady, which was not his custom;" but he seemed to have forgotten all this and was preparing cheerfully for the fatigues and pleasures of the day. While he was putting on his buskins a workman approached and presented him with six new arrows. He examined them, and taking four for himself, gave the two others to Walter Tyrrel, with the remark, "The good marksman should have the good weapons." As he was breakfasting with a good appetite, one of the monks of the abbey of St. Peter at Gloucester brought him letters from his abbot. During the night one of the brethren had been tormented with dismal visions. He had seen Jesus Christ seated upon His throne, and at His feet a woman supplicating him on behalf of the human beings who were groaning under the yoke of William. The king laughed at the omen. "Do they take me for an Englishman," said he, "with their dreams? Do they think I am one of those idiots who abandon their course or their affairs because an old woman chances to dream or sneeze? Come, Walter de Poix! To horse!"

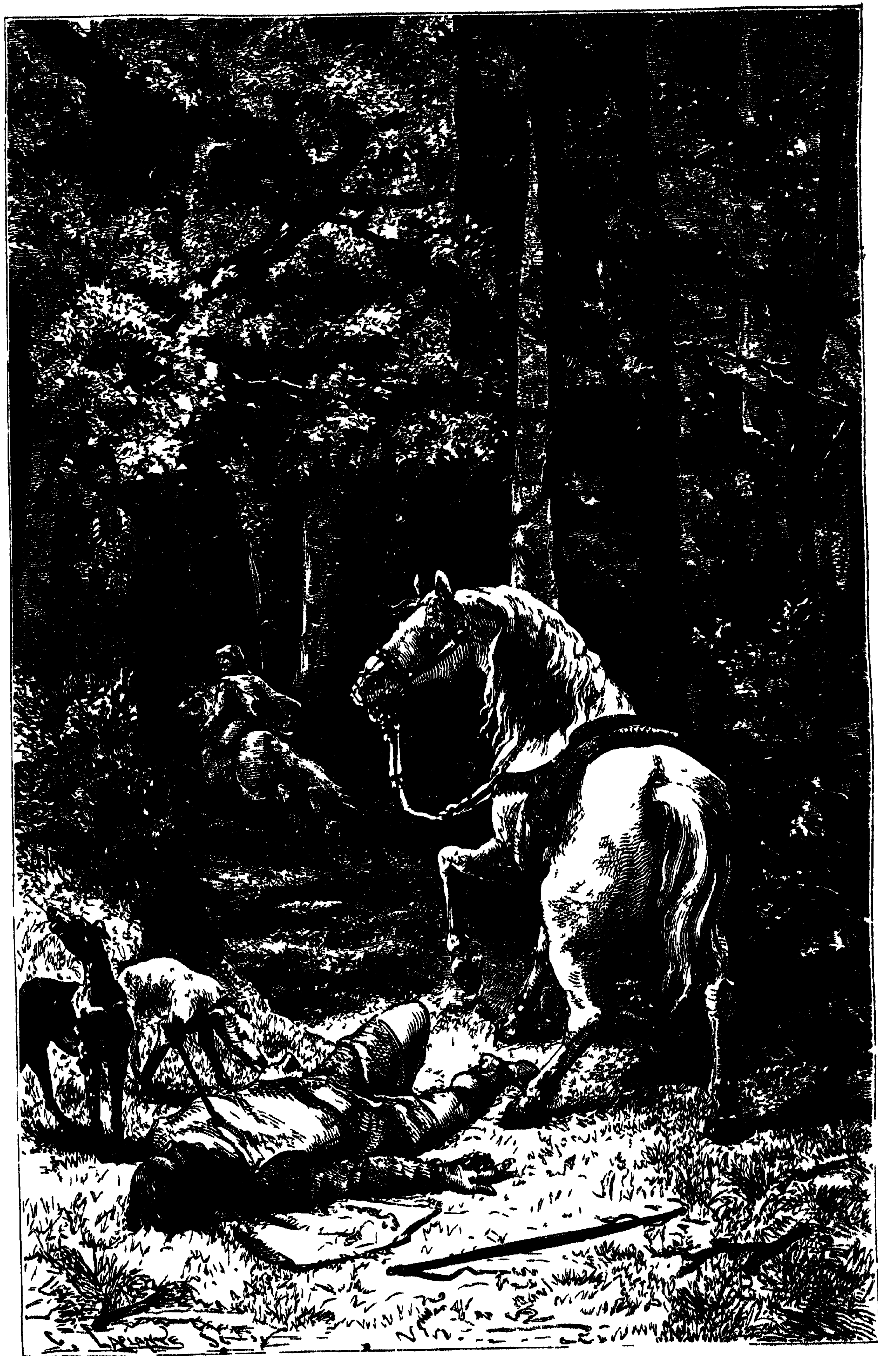
The hunting party had dispersed over the forest: Walter Tyrrel alone remained with the king. Their dogs hunted in company. Both were in search of prey when a great stag, disturbed by the commotion, unexpectedly passed between the king and his companion. William immediately drew his bow: the string of his weapon broke, and the arrow did not shoot. The stag had stopped, surprised by the noise, but not perceiving the hunters. The king had made a sign to Tyrrel, but he did not draw his bow. The king became angry, "Shoot, Walter!" he

exclaimed; "Shoot, in the devil's name!" An arrow flew, no doubt that of Tyrrel; but instead of striking the stag it buried itself in the breast of the king. He fell without uttering a word. Walter ran to him and found him dead. Fear or remorse seized upon Tyrrel; he mounted his horse again and galloping to the sea coast, got aboard a vessel, passed into Normandy, and did not rest until he had taken refuge upon the territory of the king of France.

The news of this accident had become known in the forest; but no one gave a thought to the dead body of the king. Henry had hastened to Winchester, and had already put his hand upon the keys of the Royal Treasury when William of Breteuil joined him out of breath. "We have all," he said, "thou as well as I and the barons, sworn fidelity and homage to Duke Robert thy brother if the king should die first. Absent or present, right is right." A quarrel ensued, and it was with sword in hand that Henry possessed himself of the treasure and the royal jewels. Meanwhile a charcoal-burner, who had found the corpse of the monarch in the forest, was bringing it to Winchester wrapped in old linen, and leaving on the road behind the cart a long trail of blood.

The partisans of Robert in England were not numerous: they had no leader. The duke was returning from Palestine, but he had stopped on the way with the hospitable Normans, sons of Robert Guiscard, established in Calabria and in Sicily. He had even married there. Henry meantime had taken his measures and had caused himself to be proclaimed there by the barons assembled in London. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, had been expelled from England three years previously; the archbishopric of York was vacant. It was the custom of Rufus to delay as long as possible appointing to the sees, in order that he might himself enjoy their revenues. The Bishop of London crowned the new monarch. Henry Beau-Clerc, as he was called, because he was fond of books and of churchmen, became king under the title of Henry the First.

Henry was more popular among the Saxons than his two



HE FELL WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD

brothers had been. Born and bred in England, he was regarded as an Englishman, and his first care was to address himself to the English, who were more powerful than is generally believed, and who after all still formed the mass of the people of the country. "Friends and vassals," said he, "natives of the country in which I was born, you know that my brother has designs upon my kingdom. He is a proud man, who cannot live in peace: his only wish is to trample you under his feet. On the other hand I, as a mild and pacific sovereign, intend to maintain your ancient liberties and to govern you according to your own wishes with wisdom and moderation. I will give you, if you wish it, a record in my own hand. Stand firm for me; for while I am seconded by the valour of the English I have no fear of the foolish menaces of the Normans."

While the king was thus giving to the English a first charter, which proved of short duration, he determined to seal his promises by espousing a Saxon woman. He had cast his eyes on Matilda, daughter of Malcolm, king of Scotland, and of Margaret Atheling. Matilda had been reared in a convent in England by her aunt Christina Atheling, the abbess. The young girl hesitated: she had already been sought in marriage by several noblemen, and it was repugnant to her to unite herself with the enemy of her race and country. The Normans were irritated to see their king seeking support among their enemies, and they spread the report that Matilda had taken the vows as a nun in her infancy. It was necessary to convoke the Bishops to decide the question. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, (afterwards St. Anselm) had returned to England. He had always been just towards the Saxons. When his patron and friend Lanfranc was ridiculing in his presence the Saxon devotion to St. Alphege, the archbishop who was massacred by the Danes, Anselm had said, "For myself I regard that man as a martyr, and a true martyr. He preferred to face death rather than to do a wrong to his countrymen. He died for justice, as John died for the truth, and each alike for Christ, who is truth and justice." At the head of his bishops and on the personal

testimony of Matilda, Anselm declared that she had never been consecrated to God, and the marriage took place. The queen was beautiful, charitable, and virtuous; but she exercised little influence over her husband, and was not able to prevent his often oppressing the people.

Henry had banished the favourites of his brother, who were odious to the Saxons, and Ralph Flambard, who had been a prisoner in the Tower, had scarcely escaped from that fortress, when he heard that Duke Robert had arrived in Normandy with his young wife Sibylla, daughter of the Count of Conversano. King Henry was greatly disquieted by the news. He had been careful to spread abroad the report that his brother had accepted the crown of Jerusalem, a worthy prize of his exploits in the Holy Land. The discontent of a certain number of Norman barons, and their disposition to offer their aid to Robert, compelled him more and more to depend upon the English as well as on the Church. He paid court to Anselm, and when Robert, encouraged by Ralph Flambard, published his declaration of war, the bishops and the common people of England were all on the side of King Henry. The Norman barons were divided, and the Saxon sailors, carried away no doubt by the fame which Robert had acquired in the Crusades, deserted with the fleet. It was in vessels constructed by his brother that Robert crossed with his army to English soil.

Duke Robert was undecided and wanting in settled character, but he was brave, and his affection for his family had resisted the disunion which had so long prevailed among these three brothers. Long before, when in company with William Rufus he was besieging their younger brother, now King Henry, but then only an adventurer without lands, who had seized upon Mont St. Michael, the supply of water had failed in the fortress, and the besieged prince sent to ask permission to obtain some. Robert consented, to the great vexation of William; he even sent to Henry wine for his table. "There is nothing now left to do but to send him provisions," said William moodily. "What!" exclaimed the duke, "ought I to

let our brother die of thirst? and what other brother should we have if we lost him?"

Scarcely had Robert set foot in England when those among the Normans who were averse to war interposed between the two brothers. Once more Robert renounced his pretensions to the kingdom conquered by his father. Henry ceded to him the fortresses which he still held in Normandy, and promised to pay him a pension of 3000 marks of silver. A general amnesty was agreed upon on both sides.

Treaties, however, were scarcely more effectual than charters in binding King Henry. By degrees the barons who had taken the side of Robert were expelled from their domains and banished from England. The chief of all, Robert of Belesme, earl of Shrewsbury, had given ground of dissatisfaction by raising his standard when he had been called on to appear before the royal tribunal. Besieged in Bridgnorth, he had friends in the royal camp who sought to reconcile him with the king. "Do not listen to them, King Henry," cried the English infantry, "they are desirous of drawing you into a snare. We are here and will aid thee, and will assault the town for thee. Make no peace with the traitor till you secure him alive or dead." Henry pushed on with the siege; Bridgnorth was taken, and Robert of Belesme, an exile, passed over into Normandy, where he possessed thirty castles and vast domains, which Duke Robert, faithful to the treaty, had begun to ravage as soon as he saw the Earl of Shrewsbury in revolt against his sovereign. In his chagrin at seeing the amnesty promised in his name to the barons violated, Robert went himself to England, placing himself defenceless in the hands of his brother in order to intercede for his friends. He even made a present to Queen Matilda of 1000 marks of silver a year, part of the 3000 marks which her husband had engaged to pay him. He obtained only vague promises, and from the year 1104 the resolution of King Henry to possess himself of Normandy began again to show itself clearly.

Robert had lost his wife, and disorder reigned in his court. He was still in want of money; affairs were unsettled, and

Normandy was suffering all the evils of a weak and capricious government. Henry openly declared himself the protector of the duchy against the maladministration of his brother. "I will give thee money," he wrote to him, "but yield to me the land. Thou hast the title of chief, but in reality thou rulest no longer, for those who owe thee obedience ridicule thee." Robert refused this proposal with indignation, and Henry began his preparations for invading Normandy with an armed force.

The wars were always a cruel burden for the people; the levies of money necessary for the equipment of soldiers were ruinous to the poor citizens and the unfortunate peasants. Before the departure of Henry for Normandy crowds of country people presented themselves on the road by which the king passed, casting at his feet their ploughshares in token of distress. Nevertheless the king set out and met his brother at Tinchebrai, not far from Mortagne. The struggle was fierce. The military talents of Robert were much superior to those of his brother, but his army was less considerable, and there were traitors in the camp. In the very heat of the contest Robert of Belesme took to flight with his division. The duke was made prisoner, and his forces were completely defeated. Henry at the same time seized Edgar Atheling, once the legitimate pretender to the crown, the uncle of Queen Matilda. In consideration of these facts he was allowed his liberty in England, and received from the king a small pension, which enabled him to end his days in such complete obscurity that we are even ignorant of the date of his death.

Duke Robert was not fated to enjoy a captivity so mild. He had suffered defeat on the 14th of October, 1106, the anniversary of the day when forty years previously his father had won the battle of Hastings. "God thus disposing," says the Chronicle, "that Normandy became subject to England on the same day that England had become subject to Normandy." Ralph Flambard had regained his bishopric of Durham by giving up to the king the town and fortress of Lisieux; but Robert had been conveyed to England, and lodged in the castle of Cardiff,

in Wales, which had recently been conquered by the Normans. He enjoyed there a certain amount of liberty, and hunted in the surrounding forest. One day he leaped on to his horse and took to flight. He was not well acquainted with the way; his horse sank into a bog. He was captured and taken back to his prison. When the king was acquainted with this attempt at escape, he ordered that the prisoner's eyes should be burnt out by means of a bason of red-hot iron. The captivity of the unhappy duke became complete; but his robust constitution withstood all these misfortunes. He lived twenty-eight years in his prison, blind and alone, without news of the son whom he had left a child in Normandy, and preserving to the last the dignified pride of his race. One day some new clothes were brought to him from the king; Robert handled them and discovered that one of them was unript at the seam. He was told that Henry had tried on the doublet and had found it too small for him. The duke threw all the clothes to a distance off, exclaiming, "So then my brother, or rather my traitor, that cowardly clerk who has dismembered and deprived me of sight, holds me now in such contempt—I who was once held in such honour and renown—that he makes me alms of his old clothes as to a valet!"

Robert was nearly eighty years of age when he died in 1135, some months before his brother, King Henry. He had survived in his captivity and suffering almost all the chief warriors with whom he had fought before Jerusalem.

Robert had, however, a son, William Cliton, or as they soon afterwards called him, William of Normandy; but the boy was only seven years old when his uncle, finding himself in possession of the whole of Normandy, began to besiege Valaise, where he was under guard. No one thought of declaring himself in favour of the little prince. He was taken and conducted to the king. The child cried and asked for mercy; he had reason to tremble, for his life was a great obstacle to the repose of his uncle. But making a violent effort to banish evil thoughts, the king desired to remove the little William from his pre-

sence, and he confided him to a faithful servant of his household, Helie of St. Saen. Sometime afterwards the king had changed his mind and desired to take back the little prince, but Helie carried him off secretly, and both took refuge at the court of the king of France, Louis the Fat. He was there growing up when King Henry was marrying his daughter Matilda, aged eight years, to Henry III., Emperor of Germany. The marriage of an eldest daughter was one of those occasions which gave the right to the feudal lord to levy taxes from their vassals, and King Henry used this right in such a way that the whole English people groaned under the burden. The splendour of the retinue which accompanied the little princess on her departure from England was soon forgotten; but when she returned to her native land people still remembered the tears which her marriage had cost.

King Louis VI. had promised William Cliton the investiture of Normandy, when in 1113 war again broke out between France and England. It lasted for two years, and all the castles on the frontiers were captured from Henry. His able diplomacy procured him in 1115 an advantageous treaty, which assured to Prince William of England the hand of Matilda of Anjou, daughter of the Count Fulke. No one thought of reserving the rights of William Cliton over Normandy, and when the great Norman barons were convoked in 1117 to take the oath of allegiance to Prince William, no claim was advanced in favour of the exile. His uncle had made an attempt to entice him into England, promising him the gift of three large counties; but the young man was not willing to trust himself to his father's jailer, and we meet with him again in 1119 at the head of a confederation formed on the Continent against King Henry. At the battle of Branville, which preceded by some years the close of a war of mingled success and disaster, William Cliton, or FitzRobert as he was often called, penetrated into the presence of his uncle; but his knights were repulsed, and the marriage of Prince William with Matilda of Anjou, celebrated sumptuously in 1120, destroyed the hopes which his cousin had conceived. King

Louis accepted the homage of Normandy represented by the son of the king of England, thus sparing the regal pride of Henry. The policy of this prince prevailed: he resolved to return in triumph to England, and on the 25th of November, 1120, he prepared to set sail from the little port of Barfleur, when a mariner well known upon that coast advanced towards him, presenting a mark of gold. "Stephen, son of Erard, my father, served yours on the sea," said he, "and it was he who steered the vessel aboard which your father sailed for the conquest. Sire king, I entreat you to grant me in fief the same office. I have a vessel called the *Blanchenef*, well fitted out." The king's ship was already prepared; he promised Stephen to give him as passengers the Prince William and his sister, Lady Mary, countess of Perche. The *Blanchenef* was a large vessel. Three hundred persons went aboard her as he set sail. The king had preceded them on the sea, but Thomas FitzStephen was proud of the fast sailing of his vessel, and made no haste to depart, thinking to overtake the squadron without difficulty. There was dancing and drinking upon the poop of the vessel: all the company were excited when at length they set out. Night had come on; the moon had risen; the wind was fresh. They advanced rapidly, for the sailors lent aid with the oars. They were coasting, when suddenly the ship struck upon a rock at the level of the water, then called the *Raz de Catte*, now the *Raz de Catteville*. The *Blanchenef's* planks were opened by the shock, and she began to fill with water. The cry of terror which arose from those aboard reached the vessel of the king, sailing at a considerable distance; but no one understood the cause of the noise. Henry disembarked quietly. His children had launched a boat on the sea; and Prince William had entered it with some of his companions, but the cries of his sister, the Lady Mary, induced him to return to the foundering vessel; he had nearly rescued her when the other passengers, driven wild with despair, sprang in a mass into the feeble skiff, which immediately disappeared with all occupants. The vessel sank almost at the same instant. Two men only clung to the mast, a butcher of Rouen and a young nobleman named

Gilbert de Laigle. For a moment the head of Thomas Fitz-Stephen appeared above the waves. "What has become of the king's son?" he cried to the two survivors. "He has disappeared with his sister, and every one with him," they replied. "Unhappy me!" exclaimed the pilot, as he plunged again into the waves. Gilbert's hands were frozen; he relaxed his hold of the mast which supported him and was drowned before the eyes of his companion, who was well wrapped in his sheepskin and hardened against the effects of rough weather. He held out until the morning, and was rescued by some fishermen on the coast. From his lips they learned the news of the disaster which had befallen the *Blanchenef.* In England they did not dare to apprise King Henry, who was awaiting the arrival of his children. At length a boy presented himself before him and cast himself at his feet. Henry assisted him to rise, and the child related the story of the wreck of the Norman vessel. "And from that time the king was never seen to smile," say the chroniclers, without, however, expending any more tenderness over the fate of Prince William, whose pride and harshness had caused apprehensions in England. "If I ever come to reign over these miserable Saxons," he was accustomed to say, "I will compel them to draw the plough like oxen." "So he perished on a quiet night and in calm weather," repeated the Saxons; "and it came to pass that his head, instead of being encircled by a crown of gold, was broken upon the rocks. It was God himself who decreed that the son of the Norman should not behold England again."

King Henry had no male heir, although he had married again with the daughter of the duke of Louvain. Many of the barons seemed inclined to rally around William FitzRobert, who had lately excited another revolt. Henry resolved to settle the crown upon his daughter, the Empress Maud, who had lately become a widow. All the ability of the king could not prevent at first a feeling of repugnance among the great nobles: but the royal power had become very great, supported as it was by the antagonism of two hostile races between whom the king alone held

the balance. The Normans yielded. On Christmas Day, 1126, the Empress Maud was declared heiress to the kingdom, and six months later she married Geoffrey Plantagenet,[1] son of Fulke, count of Anjou, whose father had transferred to him his domains on setting out for the Holy Land. Maud had for some time resisted the plans of her father for her marriage, which had been kept so secret that the barons protested, maintaining that the king had not the right to dispose without their approval of their future sovereign. The nuptial festivities lasted three weeks. Heralds, armed and in magnificent costume, traversed the streets and squares of Rouen, crying aloud, "In the name of King Henry, let no man here present, inhabitant or stranger, dare to absent himself from the royal rejoicings; for whosoever shall not take part in the amusements and games shall be deemed guilty of offence towards his lord the king."

Henry had obtained the oaths of all the barons, but he had too much sense and knowledge of human nature not to be aware how precarious the future situation of his daughter must be if his nephew, William FitzRobert, should live to dispute the throne. The young prince appeared, indeed, to be destined to a brilliant future. King Louis had brought about a marriage between him and the sister of his wife, a princess of Savoy, and he had given to her for a portion Pontoise, Chaumont, and the Vexin. Soon afterwards Charles the Good, count of Flanders, was assassinated in the church at the foot of the altar. Louis entered Flanders for the purpose of punishing the murderers, and the count not having left any children, Louis conferred his domains upon William FitzRobert, great grandson of the old Count Baldwin. The young count, who remained in his new territory, had soon a cause of quarrel with a certain number of his subjects, who called the king of England to their aid. The latter supported, as a rival to his nephew, the landgrave Thierry of Alsace, who soon made himself master of Lille, of Ghent,

[1] So named because he was accustomed to wear in his hat a branch of genet or broom (Planta genista) in blossom.

and other important places. The son of Robert Curthose, however, had inherited the military talents of his father and grandfather: he completely defeated his adversary under the walls of Alost; but he had received a wound in the hand from a pike, and this injury, at first regarded as of little importance, turned to gangrene. William was carried to the monastery of St. Omer, where he died on the 27th of July, 1128. He was not yet twenty-six years of age, and he left no issue. His last care had been to recommend to the clemency of his uncle the Norman barons who had served his cause. The king willingly pardoned them, so rejoiced was he to be delivered from the anxieties which his nephew caused him. Duke Robert was still living; but these successes had no more effect than the death of his son upon the dreary captivity of the unfortunate blind prisoner.

The Empress Maud and her husband often gave trouble to King Henry by their quarrels. The birth of their eldest son in 1133 for a moment appeased their dissensions. The child was christened Henry, after his grandfather, and the Normans called him Henry FitzEmpress, to distinguish him from the king, whom they called Henry FitzWilliam Conqueror. Two other sons were born to Count Geoffrey Plantagenet, and the quarrels recommenced. The count claimed Normandy, which the king had promised to relinquish in his favour; but Henry still refused. He was no more disposed than his father had been "to strip himself of his clothing before bedtime." His strength, however, was declining: he was dejected. On the 25th of November, 1135, anxious to dispel his low spirits, he set out for the forest of Lion-la-Forêt, in Normandy. When he returned he was hungry, and at supper he ate greedily of a dish of lampreys, which his physician regarded as unwholesome. His digestion was disordered: he fell ill and died on the 1st of December, at the age of sixty-six, leaving all his domains on both sides of the sea to his daughter Maud and her descendants. He had reigned thirty-five years; and, with the exception of some unimportant expeditions against the French, England had enjoyed peace under his

sway. This great blessing had been sullied by many crimes. Neither plighted faith nor natural feeling had ever impeded Henry I. in his ambitious projects; but he had placed the dominion of the Norman race in England on such solid foundations that the troubles which followed upon his death could not shake it; and if success were the test of moral worth Henry Fitz-William Conqueror might be regarded as a great king.

All his efforts and all his precautions, however, had not enabled him to secure the succession to his daughter. Scarcely had he breathed his last when his nephew Stephen, son of the Count of Blois and of Adela, daughter of William the Conqueror, set sail immediately for England. The king had always treated his nephew with particular favour; he had given him vast fiefs in England. The Count Stephen was very popular among the Normans and the Saxons. His wife, Maud, niece of Matilda, first wife of Henry I., even belonged to the royal Saxon family. Stephen boldly laid claim to the throne, which could not, he said, belong to a woman. He was descended like her from William the Conqueror, and in the same degree. England was not a property which could be bequeathed at pleasure and without respect for the wishes of the people. Many barons were of Stephen's opinion, and the treasure of King Henry, which his brother the Bishop of Winchester yielded up to him, secured to him other adherents. The chief minister of the deceased king, Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, whom Henry had originally remarked and attached to his person as "the readiest priest at saying a mass whom he had ever met with," allowed himself to be won by money. William Corbois, Archbishop of Canterbury, was more scrupulous, but was persuaded that the king, irritated by the conduct of his daughter, had adopted his nephew on his death-bed. Stephen was elected by the barons and prelates, who considered themselves absolved from their oath towards the empress because she had married without their consent; and the coronation took place at Westminster, on the 26th of December, St. Stephen's Day. The pope confirmed the election with the more readiness because Stephen had accepted the oath

of the clergy, under the condition imposed by the bishops, of respect for the liberties and discipline of the Church. The barons had obtained new fiefs, with permission to fortify their castles and to construct new ones. Those who were greedy for gain received money, and King Stephen was in such high favour on both sides of the sea that when Geoffrey Plantagenet entered Normandy to claim the rights of his wife, the natural animosity of the Normans against the Angevins broke forth with violence. The count was compelled to retire, and to conclude with Stephen a truce for two years, in consideration of a pension of 3000 marks of silver. The king crossed over into Normandy, and received there the homage of the barons; and Louis VII., surnamed the Young, then king of France, betrothed his young sister, Constance, to the little Eustace, son of Stephen, granting to the child the investiture of Normandy.

Among the barons who had taken the oath of allegiance to Stephen was Robert, earl of Gloucester, a natural son of Henry I., who had renounced all rights to the throne in favour of his sister, the Empress Maud. Like her, he had pretended to yield, but like her he had not abandoned the cause. Maintained in the possession of his large domains through his oath of fidelity, he crossed from Normandy into England, and very soon the tranquillity which had reigned there gave place to a secret agitation. Several partial risings took place; but these were only the precursors of the great insurrection which Gloucester was preparing, and which David, king of Scotland, was about to support as protector of the rights of his sister, the Empress Maud.

The mine was dug. The Earl of Gloucester retired into Normandy, whence he wrote to Stephen solemnly renouncing his allegiance. Other great barons followed his example, and, fortifying themselves in their castles, overwhelmed the king with reproaches, accusing him of having failed to keep his oath towards them. "Ah!" exclaimed Stephen, "the traitors! they made me king, and now they desert me; but, by the Nativity of God! they shall never make me a deposed king!"

In this perilous situation Stephen displayed great energy, laying siege to the rebel castles one after the other, and disposing largely of the domains of the crown in favour of the barons who were faithful or who became penitent. Meanwhile the king of Scotland had entered Northumberland at the head of a numerous army from the Highlands and Lowlands, isles and mountains, the regular troops and undisciplined savages, knights clad in iron, the best lances in Europe, and mountaineers half naked, constituting this army of "Scotch emmets," as the English expressed it, covered all the country extending from the Tweed to the north of the county of York, ravaging and pillaging on their way. The king was at a distance, detained by the insurrections of the barons in the South. The northern counties defended themselves. The Normans called to their aid the inhabitants of the country, those English who, though so often oppressed, possessed a vitality which resisted every form of tyranny. They united with their conquerors to defend the country against this attack. The archbishop of York, Toustain or Thurstan, a decrepid old man, sinking under age and infirmities, but full of energy and foresight, caused a search to be made in the churches for the standards of St. John of Beverley, St. Cuthbert of Durham, and St. Wilfred of Ripon, which had remained there since the Conquest. They raised aloft these consecrated banners upon a car similar to the *carroccio* which bore the standards of the Italian Republics. In the midst of the flags arose a pedestal bearing the tabernacle and the sacred host. The English surrounded the sacred car, with their long-bows in their hands. They halted at Elfertun (now North Allerton), awaiting the arrival of the Scotch. There was a dense mist, and the enemy might have taken the English army by surprise, but for Robert Bruce and Bernard Baliol, who possessed domains in England and Scotland. The former of these two knights approached King David. "O king!" he exclaimed, "do you bear in mind against whom you are going to fight? It is against the Normans and the English, who have so often served you well with counsel and arms, and have

succeeded in securing to you the obedience of your people of Celtic race. Remember that it is we who have placed these tribes in your hands, and thence arises the hatred with which they are animated towards our countrymen." "These are the words of a traitor," exclaimed William, nephew of the King of Scotland. At the same instant Malise, earl of Strathern, was heard to exclaim, "What need have we of this stranger? I have no breastplate, and yet I will advance as far as any among them." The old Norman turned his horse's head. "I retract my oath of fidelity and homage, O king!" he cried, and, spurring his horse, he hastened towards the English, with Bernard Baliol, crying out that the Scotch were following them.

The Bishop of Durham was standing erect upon the sacred car, as representative of the old Archbishop of York. He pronounced absolution in a loud voice, and the English and Normans, who had been kneeling, arose, exclaiming "Amen!" The Scotch were already charging, amidst cries of "Alban, Alban!" the historical name of their country. Their impetuous attack had broken the ranks of the English; but the Norman cavalry, in close order around the car, steadily repulsed the charge. The archers formed again, and began to harass the mountaineers with their shafts; the long pikes of the men of Galloway were broken upon the Norman bucklers; the claymores of the Highlanders could not pierce their breastplates. The fight lasted two hours, and the confusion was terrible. Prince Henry, son of the King of Scotland, had succeeded in cleaving a way up to the standards, but he was repulsed. The lances and the swords were broken. The fury of the attack abated; the retreat soon became a rout, protected only by King David and his corps of knights, who had rallied around him. The Scotch took refuge in Carlisle, where the English did not attack them. The treaty of peace, which was concluded in the following year, even left Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Northumberland in the power of Scotland.

The defeat of the Scots at the battle of the Standard had cooled the ardour of the malcontents. The Empress Maud and



THE ENGLISH AND NORMANS AROSE, EXCLAIMING "AMEN."

the Earl of Gloucester had not yet appeared in England; but King Stephen committed a grave error. He alienated from himself the attachment of the clergy who, up to that time, had been favourable to him, by suddenly casting into prison the Bishop of Salisbury, one of the partisans who had had the greatest share in his elevation, and whom he had up to then loaded with wealth and honours. "By the Nativity of God!" he exclaimed to one of his attendants, "I would give him one-half of England if he asked it. He should grow weary of asking before I would grow weary of giving, until the day when he should be dumb." That day had apparently arrived, for Roger of Salisbury and his two nephews, Bishops of Lincoln and Ely, were suddenly arrested. The Bishop of Ely succeeded in escaping and taking refuge in a fortress. He defended himself valiantly; but they threatened to starve to death his uncle and his brother if he did not yield. The manners of the time were such that there was reason to fear the execution of the threat. The Bishop of Ely surrendered, and the king took possession of the property of the three prelates; but he had irritated a dangerous enemy. His own brother, the Bishop of Winchester, and the Legate of the Pope in England, summoned him to appear before a Synod of bishops to answer for this breach of the privileges of the Church. It was necessary to appeal to the Pope against the prelates, and to disperse the Synod by force. The Bishop of Salisbury died shortly afterwards—"of chagrin," say the Chronicles. His nephews embraced the cause of the Empress, and a great part of the clergy followed their example. The Synod had just been dispersed (September, 1139) when Maud at length disembarked in England with one hundred knights only. Some Normans went to meet her, but finding her so ill attended they kept back. King Stephen swept down upon Arundel Castle, where resided Queen Adelais, widow of Henry I. He found her engaged in assisting her daughter-in-law who had just arrived. A chivalrous sentiment restrained Stephen from insulting the two princesses. He left Adelais in peaceable possession of the castle, and the empress was able to proceed and meet her brother the Earl of Gloucester,

who was endeavouring to revive the discontent in the counties of the West. Her partisans soon rallied round her, and raising her standard she attacked the king. Sometimes she was defeated, sometimes victorious; and for eighteen months England was afflicted by the horrors of civil war. At last a decisive combat near Lincoln resulted in King Stephen falling into the hands of the Earl of Gloucester. He was cast into confinement in Bristol castle. The barons who had followed him hastened to the empress, made peace with her, and acknowledged her right to the crown, the Legate and the Bishop of Winchester being foremost. On the 7th of April a meeting of bishops, again presided over by the Legate, ratified the accession of Maud, absolving all the barons and the prelates from their oath towards Stephen; but the empress was obliged to allow some months to elapse before her coronation at Westminster, so attached were the citizens of London to the cause of the vanquished king.

Maud was haughty, and she lacked the tact and prudence so necessary to sovereigns whose throne is insecure. She harshly refused to give to the Bishop of Winchester the patrimonial lands of King Stephen, which he claimed on behalf of his nephew, Prince Eustace; and thus she mortally offended that proud prelate. On arriving in London she demanded immediately an enormous tollage. "The king has left us nothing," said the citizens piteously. "I understand," replied the new queen, "you have given everything to my adversary, and you desire me to spare you." London ended the dispute by promising to pay, presenting at the same time an humble petition. "Restore to us (they implored) the good laws of King Edward, thy great uncle, in the place of those of thy father, King Henry I., which are bad and too harsh towards us." The queen rudely repulsed the petitioners, and she was awaiting the arrival of the promised gold when the bells of the city suddenly sounded the alarum. From each house issued a combatant armed with an axe, a bar of iron, or a bow, "like bees issuing from a hive," says the chronicle; all took the direction of the palace. At the same time a troop of armed men, carrying the banner of Queen

Matilda, wife of Stephen, presented themselves on the banks of the Thames upon the Surrey side. The empress was at table; she sprang upon her horse and fled by the western gate, accompanied only by some servants, while the multitude pillaged the hall which she had just quitted. She was destined never to return to London.

The empress took refuge at Oxford. She had conceived some doubts with regard to the fidelity of the Bishop of Winchester. whom she sent for. "Say that I am preparing," replied the prelate. The queen had conceived the design of surprising him in his episcopal city; but at the moment when she entered by one gate she saw him go forth by another, on his way to place himself at the head of the partisans of his brother. The queen gathered her adherents about her; but the bishop had returned, and he laid siege to Winchester, where the King of Scotland and the Earl of Gloucester had joined Queen Matilda. All military operations had been suspended for the festival of the Holy Cross (14th September, 1141), when at daybreak Maud mounted her horse, accompanied by a good escort, and silently departed from the royal castle. She passed without serious difficulties through the camp of the besiegers, who were occupied in the ceremonies of the day. When the pursuit commenced Maud was already drawing near to the castle of Devizes; but she did not feel herself to be safe here, thoroughly as that place had been fortified by the Bishop of Salisbury, and she continued her course. The Earl of Hereford alone accompanied her as far as Gloucester. The King of Scotland had set out for his kingdom, but the Earl of Gloucester was taken prisoner. A great number of his adherents were disguised as peasants, but their Norman accent betrayed them, and the English hinds seizing this occasion to wreak vengeance on their oppressors arrested them, and whip in hand conducted them into the enemy's camp.

The two parties were without leaders, for Matilda could do nothing without her brother. It was resolved to exchange the Earl of Gloucester for King Stephen, and in a grand council of bishops convened on the 7th of December by the Legate, the

latter hurled all the thunders of the Church against the partisans of the Countess of Anjou (by which name he described Maud), as he had done on the 7th of April against the adherents of the Count of Blois. The war continued in England and in Normandy: the Count of Anjou had subjected that great province, but he refused to cross the sea to join his wife, and contented himself with sending his eldest son Henry into England with his uncle, the Earl of Gloucester. At the moment when the young prince landed in the country whe e he was destined to establish his race, his mother was besieged in Oxford by King Stephen. The winter was one of great severity, and the sufferings of the nation were unparalleled. The barons fortified themselves each in his castle, "and even in the churches," say the chronicles, adding, that "they dug trenches in the churchyards, exposing to the daylight the bones of the dead. From thence armed men pillaged the towns and villages, the passers-by, and the lonely cottages. It was possible to walk all day without meeting a man upon the road, or seeing an acre of land in cultivation—for to till the earth was like tilling the sands of the sea-shore. Never had the pagan pirates inflicted worse evils."

The siege of Oxford lasted three months; the snow covered the ground. Maud found herself on the point of perishing by famine. She attired herself in white, as did three knights of her suite, and the four issued by a little postern, and traversed the deserted country as far as the town of Abingdon, where they obtained horses. The castle of Oxford surrendered on the morrow; but Stephen was soon afterwards defeated before Wilton by the Earl of Gloucester.

In the midst of these alternate successes and disasters, the burden of which weighed equally and constantly on the people, the Earl of Gloucester died (1147). His nephew, whom he had kept in Bristol Castle, in order to protect him against his enemies, returned into Normandy, and shortly afterwards the empress herself, deprived of all support, relinquished the part she had played with so much fortitude for eight years in order to return to France. King Stephen was now master of the situation; but

his throne, shaken under him, was not destined to become firm again.

Pope Innocent II., the protector of the Bishop of Winchester, had just died: Celestine II. and Lucius II. had enjoyed the



pontifical throne only for the briefest space. Anastasius II. withdrew the title of legate from the king's brother, and granted it to his adversary Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury. Stephen had taken a part in the quarrel of his brother with the archbishop, whom he had exiled; and a part of the kingdom had been placed under an interdict. The Church was too strong for a

sovereign so feeble: Stephen was compelled to cede great estates to the clergy, and to be reconciled with Theobald. But in vain he sought to obtain the recognition of his eldest son Eustace as his successor; the archbishop constantly refused his countenance; the quarrels broke out afresh, and the episcopal domains were confiscated in several places.

So long as King Stephen had only to contend against a woman, however divided England was, he had the best chances of success; but his new rival, Henry, was sixteen years of age: he had just been knighted in Scotland (1149) by his uncle, King David, and on his return he received from his uncle the investiture of Normandy. In 1150 Geoffrey of Anjou died, and his domains reverted to his eldest son, who two years later married Queen Eleanora, the divorced wife of King Louis the Young. She brought him, as her portion, the county of Poitou and the duchy of Aquitaine. He was nineteen years of age; his personal reputation, like his power, was growing daily. The party of the Plantagenets in England began to raise their heads, and when the prince landed in 1153, with an army small in number but strong in discipline, many adherents came to take service under his banner. King Stephen had also gathered together his forces, and the two rivals found themselves face to face at Wallingford, separated only by the Thames. They remained there two days without coming to blows. At length the Earl of Arundel had the courage to declare, that it was a folly to prolong the sufferings of an entire nation for the sake of the ambition of two princes. It was resolved to sign a truce with a view to negotiate a permanent peace. About that time Eustace, the eldest son of Stephen, died in consequence of great excesses. The king had now only one son, who was still young and not ambitious. The two rival ecclesiastics, the Bishop of Winchester and the Archbishop of Canterbury, conducted the negotiations, and on the 7th of November, 1153, in a solemn council held at Winchester, King Stephen adopted Prince Henry as a son, giving the kingdom of England as an inheritance to him and his descendants for ever. Henry took the oath of fidelity and

homage, receiving in his turn the allegiance of Prince William, the son of Stephen, on whom he conferred all the patrimonial lands of his father. A year later, on the 25th of October, 1154, King Stephen expired at Dover in his fiftieth year. For a while, at least, civil war was about to cease to desolate England.



CHAPTER VII.

HENRY II (1154-1189)

WHEN King Henry II. ascended the throne in 1154, he was the most powerful monarch that had ever reigned in England, and one of the most powerful in Christendom. To his hereditary possessions, Anjou, Normandy, and Maine, and his beautiful kingdom of England, he had added by his marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine, Poitou, and Aquitaine, which comprised Saintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, Limousin, Angoumois, and Guienne. He was ambitious and greedy of power. His father, who knew him well, had provided by his will that Anjou should return to his second son Geoffrey, if the eldest should become King of England, and in order to secure this arrangement he had forbidden his own interment before Henry should have sworn to conform to it. The prince hesitated long, then took the oath, and Count Geoffrey Plantagenet was consigned to the tomb. But Henry had become king and his brother had claimed the execution of his promise. The monarch contrived to be relieved of his oath by Nicholas

Breakspeare, who had been raised to the pontifical dignity under the name of Adrian IV., the only Englishman who has ever become Pope. Henry Plantagenet retained Anjou, the cradle of that family which he was destined to render so powerful.

When the new king landed in England, six weeks after the death of Stephen, he found his kingdom a prey to horrible anarchy. In the intervals of their power Maud and Stephen had both endeavoured to attach to themselves the great nobles by important grants of lands and castles: hence the royal domains were reduced to insignificance and were surrounded on all sides by menacing fortresses guarded by resolute soldiers who recognized no authority but that of their chiefs. Many of these fortresses were in the hands of Flemish and Brabantine mercenaries whom each party in turn had summoned to their assistance. It was by dealing with these men that Henry began the reforms which he reckoned upon introducing into the condition of territorial property. On a given day, to the great joy of the Normans and Saxons, he ordered all foreigners to leave the kingdom. "We saw them (says a chronicler), we saw all those Brabantines and Flemings recross the sea to return to their plough-tails, and from being lords become serfs again."

The expulsion of the foreign mercenaries had been popular; but this was not the principal object of the king, who desired to reconstitute the royal domain, and with that object convoked a grand council, which admitted, though not without difficulty, that Henry was under the necessity of resuming the grants made by Stephen and Maud. The king was not more sparing of the partisans of his mother than of her enemies. From the moment that right was on his side he never stopped in his efforts: from castle to castle, from domain to domain, he triumphed over the malcontents, either by the sword or by negotiation. When he became master of one fortress he instantly had it razed to the ground. In this way eleven hundred castles disappeared from the face of England, they had been mere haunts of robbers who oppressed the country roundabout. The peasants and the townspeople applauded the work of destruction.

King Henry had already triumphed over his vassals and defeated his brother Geoffrey, who had refused to acquiesce in his spoliation. He had compelled him to take refuge at Nantes, the population of which town had offered him the government. In 1157 he came to the determination to bring to an end the struggle with the Welsh, who were still fighting proudly for their independence. But Henry did not know well that country of mountains and defiles. He became entangled in the environs of the forest of Coleshill, and the Welsh sallying forth in a mass from the obscure lurking-places where they had been lying in ambush, fell upon the English army. The massacre was great. The Earl of Essex, hereditary standard-bearer of the crown, let fall the royal banner, and took to flight. The rumour spread abroad at once that the king was killed, but he soon rallied his troops and effected his retreat to a more open country, where he pitched his camp, and thence inflicted so much annoyance on the Welsh that without venturing a second time upon a fixed battle they consented to restore to Henry the territory which they had won back from Stephen, and to swear fidelity and homage to him for the lands which they retained. The struggles of King Henry with the Welsh were not ended. Repeated insurrections were destined to recall him into the mountains; but he succeeded nevertheless in securing and extending his dominion over that indomitable population, proud of the antiquity of their race, and convinced that all England belonged to them by right of birth.

Geoffrey had lately died at Nantes (1158) and his brother claimed that city as belonging to him by inheritance. In vain the citizens protested: in vain Conan, duke of Brittany, and earl of Richmond in England, maintained the rights of his vassals, King Henry confiscated the lands of the Earl of Richmond and crossed the sea with so powerful an army that the inhabitants of Nantes were terrified and opened their gates to him. Henry immediately took possession of all the territory between the Loire and the Vilaine, and proposed to the duke to terminate their differences by affiancing his daughter Constance

to Geoffrey, the third of the English princes. In order to obtain the consent of the King of France, Louis VII., to this increase of his power upon French soil, Henry had sought the hand of Margaret of France on behalf of Henry, his eldest son.

This gleam of a good understanding between the great powers of the earth was very soon disturbed by new ambitious dreams of Henry Plantagenet. Eleanor of Aquitaine had, or believed herself to have through her grandmother, claims to the countship of Toulouse. Her first husband, Louis VII., had relinquished those rights by treaty after an attempt to seize them by force of arms; but by virtue of the divorce, Eleanor, had vested her pretensions in her second husband. Henry, king of England, who claimed the cession pure and simple of the countship by Raymond of St. Gilles, count of Toulouse. The latter invoked the aid of his suzerain lord, the King of France. In the prospect of this distant struggle, Henry commuted the military service which his vassals were bound to render into a tax, and by means of this money he secured the services of an army of Brabantines. With these marched Malcolm, king of Scotland; and the King of Aragon, who like the King of France and the Duke of Brittany had lately affianced his daughter to one of the sons of Henry, and the most warlike of the English barons. But Louis VII. had already entered Toulouse, when Henry advanced against that city. Louis had but few troops with him and the King of England might easily have attempted an assault: scruples based upon his position of vassal of his lord, however, restrained him. When the French army had joined Louis VII. a few feats of arms of little importance soon brought the war to an end; but it had left indelible traces. The inhabitants of the south of France had acquired the habit of calling to their aid sometimes the King of France, sometimes the King of England, and their independence was destined to succumb under these powerful protectors. It was so well known upon the banks of the Garonne that the southern provinces were at peace when their dangerous allies were quarrelling elsewhere that people

openly asked, in the form of a prayer, "When will the truce between the English and the Tournois come to an end?"

In the midst of these wars and negotiations, these invasions and these treaties, King Henry relied on all sides upon the advice and the support of Thomas Becket, or à Becket, chancellor of England, the son of Gilbert à Becket, a merchant of the city of London, of Norman origin. A romantic story attaches to the birth of Thomas Becket. It is related that the busy passers-by in the streets of London, had, to their great surprise, observed one day a woman wearing Oriental costume who was wandering about repeating the name of Gilbert. To questions put to her she gave no answer, and she knew no other English words than "Gilbert" and "London." The people around her had begun to murmur, when she was recognized by a servant who had accompanied Gilbert Becket to the crusades. Both had been made prisoners and had succeeded in escaping: but the daughter of the Emir who had held them captive had conceived a passion for Gilbert; she had followed his traces to the shore and had found means of going to England, and then to London, without any other guide to the whereabouts of him she loved than this name of Gilbert, at that time a very common one. Becket consulted his confessor; the Saracen princess was baptized under the name of Matilda, and Gilbert married her. Her husband made a great fortune and his son Thomas, a handsome and intelligent youth, had been brought up with great care, then sent into France and Italy to finish his education. He had been taken notice of from his childhood by Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, who took him into his house as soon as he had completed his studies and employed him in the most delicate diplomatic affairs when at the accession of King Henry II. he himself fulfilled the functions of prime minister. The king took a liking to the young archdeacon, and in 1156 appointed him chancellor, at the same time confiding to him the education of his eldest son. He also made him constable of the Tower, with the custody of considerable domains. The ecclesiastical benefices often vacant, which the chancellor was in

no haste to fill up, caused to flow into the treasury the rich revenues of the bishoprics and abbeys. Gilbert Becket was dead, and his son had inherited a great fortune. He was forty years of age, elegant in his person, magnificent in his attire, skilled in all bodily exercises, and at the same time learned, courageous, enterprising, and able. The king, who saw only through his eyes, kept him incessantly at his side, and could not endure his absence. Becket kept a splendid retinue remarkable even at that period of magnificent extravagance. His house was filled with knights and daughters of great lords who designed to secure by this means the favour of the king, and to bring up their children in the manners of the court. His sumptuously furnished table was open to all comers, and when a diplomatic mission led the chancellor abroad, the retinue which accompanied him was so magnificent and so numerous that the spectators exclaimed, "What must the King of England be, when his servant travels with such pomp?" It was in this way that Thomas Becket presented himself at the French court to negotiate on the affair of Brittany and the alliance of Prince Henry with Margaret of France. With similar grand display, although of a different nature, he accompanied the king in his campaign through the countship of Toulouse, of which he directed in person the greater part of the operations. He was at the head of seven hundred knights and men of arms, supported at his expense, when he attacked the town of Cahors and the castles which surrounded it. His sagacity, his good humour, his caustic and fertile wit were to the king a continual source of amusement. He lived with his favourite in almost brotherly intimacy, and the administrative talents which the chancellor displayed in domestic affairs added to his popularity. "I will make thee Archbishop of Canterbury," Henry often said. Becket smiled and shook his head. When the prior of Leicester, a rigid ecclesiastic, reproached him with the worldliness and outward show of his mode of living, reminding him that he was destined to become primate of England, the chancellor exclaimed, "I know three poor priests more fitted than I for

that dignity. If ever I attained it, I should either lose the king's favour, or forget my duty towards God."

The Archbishop Theobald was dead (1161). For thirteen months the king left the see vacant, in order to appropriate its revenues: but he did not lose sight of the choice on which he had resolved. Becket was devoted to him: he had always displayed great respect for the royal prerogative, exacting so rigorously what was due to the crown, even from the clergy, that the Bishop of London, Gilbert Folliot, accused him angrily of plunging a dagger into the maternal bosom of his Church. Henry believed himself sure of thus raising to the ecclesiastical supremacy a friend who would support him in the reforms which he was meditating. He sent for Thomas Becket at Toulouse, where he happened to be, and ordered him to set out immediately for England, where he would be elected archbishop of Canterbury. Becket smiled as he pointed to the magnificent dress in which he was clothed, "You choose fine dresses to figure at the head of your monks at Canterbury," he said. "If you do as you say, sire, you will hate me very soon as much as you now love me; for you will meddle in the affairs of the Church more than I can consent to, and people will not be wanting to embroil us."

The king paid no heed to the views of the chancellor. The bishops and the chapter of Canterbury proclaimed Becket unanimously, with the exception of Gilbert Folliot, who had hoped to secure that promotion for himself. The new archbishop received the order of priesthood for he was hitherto only a deacon, and he was consecrated by Henry of Winchester, brother of King Stephen. The pallium was brought from Rome, and Becket took possession of the archiepiscopal throne.

In placing his hand upon the pastoral crozier Becket had completely changed his way of living. From the most ostentatious luxury he suddenly passed to the austerest life. No more festivities; no more horses; no more sumptuous clothing. The rich revenues were expended in alms; the archbishop had resigned his position as chancellor, saying that he could not do justice to the affairs of the king as well as those of the Church.

Henry was astonished at this transformation; but as yet it caused him no irritation. When the court returned to England the archbishop conducted his royal pupil to his father and the king exhibited towards him the affection and the confidence to which he had been accustomed.

Meanwhile the storm was approaching. Becket had resolved to restore to the see of Canterbury its primitive splendour; and to take back from the hands of the despoiler the property of which the chapter had been deprived by slow degrees. This measure, similar to that which Henry had long before applied to the crown property, seemed to the king objectionable when the matter in hand was the lands of the archbishopric. Becket even dared to demand a castle, and he had excommunicated a vassal holding directly from the crown who had expelled a priest from his domains. It was with an ill will and after much difficulty that the archbishop withdrew his sentence in obedience to the king's orders.

While these clouds were gathering in the sky Henry was preparing a measure fatal to the good understanding between himself and his favourite. The priests and all those who depended, directly or indirectly, on the Church, had the right of being judged exclusivly by ecclesiastical tribunals; and clerical justice was accused of great partiality. Its very laws forbade the shedding of blood. Thus a servant of the Church could not be condemned to death even for murder, and this assurance often led to the most odious crimes, the repression of which was uncertain. The king had resolved to remedy this inconvenience by requiring that every priest degraded for his misdeeds should be given up to the civil tribunals, who should judge him in their turn. Becket maintained that it would be unjust to judge and punish twice the same culprit. The greater number of the bishops were of his opinion. The king shifted the question; "Will you," he asked the assembly of prelates, "swear to maintain the ancient customs of the realm?" "Save the honour of our order," replied all the bishops, with the exception of Hilary of Chichester. The king was furious. He convoked a great

council at Clarendon (January 25, 1164), where he presented to the bishops a series of decrees and laws regulating the relations of the civil and ecclesiastical tribunals, which have since been known under the name of "The Constitutions of Clarendon." He had striven to intimidate the bishops by stripping Becket of the castles and the titles which he had given to him long before. Alternately threatening and yielding, the archbishop had arrived at Clarendon: he had consented to sign the Constitutions; the act was complete, and it only remained now to affix the seals when Becket was seized with remorse. "I will never affix my seal to this," he said, and without listening to the representations of his colleagues, or the counsels of the Grand Master of the Templars, or taking heed of the anger of the king, who had left the hall of council in a fit of rage, he remounted his horse and returned gloomily to Canterbury, lamenting over his sins as the cause of the enslavement of the Church in England. "I was taken from the court to become a bishop—vain and proud as I was—not from the school of the Saviour, but from the palace of Cæsar. I was a feeder of birds, and I was suddenly called on to be the pastor of men; I was the patron of mummers and took delight in following the hounds, I have become the keeper of many souls. I neglected my own vineyard, and now I am entrusted with the vineyard of others." He fasted and prayed, refusing to ascend the steps of the altar; and he found no rest until the Pope had sent him absolution for his failings. The pontiff had not ratified the Constitutions of Clarendon.

The king had not abandoned his project. His anger was directed against the archbishop, whom he rightly regarded as the only serious obstacle to his designs. He summoned him to appear before his council which met at Southampton (October, 1164), under pretext of a denial of justice on the part of his archiepiscopal court. Becket excused himself, but was condemned to forfeit his personal property, a sentence which was commuted into a fine of five hundred pounds sterling. The charges against him were not yet exhausted. A demand was

made for the rents which he had received from lands given to him by the king. The archbishop promised payment. Each day brought some new claim. The king, who was furious against his old favourite, demanded at length a sum of 44,000 marks of silver, on account of the ecclesiastical revenues which Becket had appropriated as chancellor during the vacancies of the sees. This was absolute ruin, and war to the knife. The archbishop replied that it was not in his power to pay such a sum, and that he had been declared free from all such claims when he had resigned his place as chancellor in order to become Primate of England. At the same time he requested a conference with the bishops; but all had abandoned him. Henry of Winchester alone proposed to pay the sums demanded of the archbishop. The king would not listen to him. "What he desires is your resignation," said the Bishops of London and Winchester to Becket. "The life of this man is in danger," exclaimed the Bishop of Lincoln. "He will lose his bishopric or his life; and I would like to know of what use his bishopric will be when he is dead."

Under the effects of so many violent emotions the archbishop had been taken ill; he sincerely believed himself to be bound to maintain the juridical rights of the Church, and in his mind this cause was absolutely identified with the cause of God. To allow the ecclesiastical privileges to be trammelled by the royal authority, appeared to him "an act of treason against the Lord God who had elevated him, unworthy as he was, to the office of pastor of souls." Defeated and troubled, he at one time thought of throwing himself at the king's feet, and begging him to spare the Church for the sake of their old friendship; but Becket's was a proud and ungovernable spirit, and such humiliation appeared impossible to him; he therefore resolved to fight it out to the last. It was on the 18th of October, 1164, that he was to appear before the court to receive his final sentence. Clad in his episcopal robes, he celebrated mass in honour of Saint Stephen, the first martyr; and then, after laying down his mitre, he advanced, holding a crucifix in his hand, and

followed by the priests into the council-chamber. As he was entering, the Bishop of Hereford came to him, with the intention of taking the crucifix from him. "Allow me to keep it, my lord," he said; "it is the banner of the Prince whom I serve." The Bishop of London, Gilbert Foliot, was there, and also wished to take the crucifix from the hands of the prelate. "You defy the king," cried he, "by coming in this garb to his court; but the king holds a sword, the point of which is sharper than your crucifix." The archbishop had, however, entered the council-chamber, and on seeing him Henry blushed deeply and hastily retired. The archbishop sat down, but the bishops had been called away by the king; discord reigned in the royal chamber. Henry was furious, and railed bitterly first against the obstinacy of the archbishop, and then against the cowardice of his own advisers. The Archbishop of York retired, calling all his followers, in order, as he said, to avoid seeing bloodshed. The Bishop of Exeter went and threw himself at Becket's feet, imploring him to give in and to save his life. "Go," said the archbishop, "you do not understand those things which are of God." At length the bishops returned with Hilary of Chichester at their head. "You were our primate," he said, "but in putting yourself in opposition to the royal will you have broken your oath of allegiance; a perjured archbishop has no longer any claim upon our obedience; we will submit the affair to the pope, and call upon you to answer before him for your conduct." "I understand," replied the archbishop coldly.

The noblemen had followed the bishops, and the Earl of Leicester approached Becket. "Hear your sentence," he began. "My sentence!" cried Becket; "my son, listen to me first: you know how faithfully I have served the king, and with what repugnance I accepted this duty to please him. You are my children in God; can a son sit in judgment on his father? I take exception to your tribunal and appeal to the Pope. I place myself, as well as my Church, under his protection, and summon the bishops who have obeyed the king rather than

their God, to answer at that tribunal; it is under the protection of the Holy Catholic Church and of the apostolic see that I leave this court."

He had risen from his seat, and all the bishops had done likewise; followed by his priests, he strode slowly across the room; the courtiers insulted him and threw at him the bundles of straw which covered the floor. Somebody called out "traitor." "Were it not for the garments which I wear, that coward would repent his insolence," said the archbishop, who then mounted his horse, while he was saluted by the cries of the people who were prostrating themselves and asking his benediction. The prelate caused the doors of the monastery in which he resided to be opened, and the poor entered in crowds, the archbishop giving them a supper, and sitting down to table with them himself.

The Scriptures were being read, and Becket was struck by these words of the Lord: "If you are persecuted in one town, fly to another." He sent to the king for a passport. "You shall be answered to-morrow," was the message sent back from the palace. The friends of Becket were in great fear. "This night will be your last if you do not fly," said the clergy. The archbishop at length decided to leave England. Mounted on horseback, and accompanied by three priests, he set out in the direction of Kent, amidst torrents of rain that compelled him to cut off the skirts of his long mantle, which were wet and heavy and were irksome to him. He wandered about in the disguise of a monk, and under the name of Brother Christian, during twenty days in Kent, meeting with many adventures. At length he procured a little vessel, and landed on the 2nd of November, 1164, in the countship of Boulogne, near Gravelines, whence he repaired on foot and in the same disguise, to the convent of Saint-Bertin, near Namur.

The fugitive's first thought was to ask shelter of the King of France and protection of Pope Alexander II., who was then residing at Sens; the anti-Pope Victor held possession of Rome. The ambassadors of Henry II. had preceded Becket at both

courts; but Louis the Young, an enemy to the King of England and therefore unwilling to do the latter a service, haughtily declared that it was the ancient privilege of the French crown to succour the oppressed against their persecutors. The Pope at first received Becket's representative rather coldly; but he ended by deciding to brave the anger of Henry II. and received the fallen archbishop with great kindness. "If I had been willing to do the bidding of the king in all things," said Becket, "nobody in his kingdom would now be as great as I; but I know that I obtained through him the position which I occupy to the prejudice of the liberty of the Church; that is the reason that I throw myself at your Holiness's feet; your Holiness must appoint a new primate of England." The Pope did not accept this resignation, and having caused the Constitutions of Clarendon to be read to the prelate, he condemned them, with the exception of six clauses; then raising the archbishop, whom he had reinvested with his ecclesiastical dignity, "Go," said he, "and learn in poverty to console the poor." The Pope assigned the abbey of Pontigny to him as his residence, and authorized him to excommunicate the enemies of the Church.

When Henry heard of the success of his adversary, his anger knew no bounds; not only did he confiscate both the goods and revenues of Becket and the priests who had followed him, but he included in his revenge all the members of the archbishop's family as well as all his friends. He proscribed more than four hundred persons, men, women, and children, whom he sent, divested of everything, to Becket, to complain of the misfortune which he had brought upon them. Every day these unhappy people would present themselves at the convent of Pontigny, breaking the heart of the archbishop, who found no rest until the time when the combined charity of King Louis, the Pope, and the Queen of Sicily, provided for the necessities of the exiles.

Meanwhile, King Henry had on hand grave affairs which would soon have made him forget his grievances against the archbishop, if he had been of a less vindictive disposition. The

Welsh had revolted, and the war against them had been unfortunate in consequence of bad weather; the king had consoled himself for this by causing the noses of the hostages to be cut off and their eyes destroyed; but this was not sufficient to appease his anger. He found satisfaction in Brittany, where he profited by the rebellion against Conan. Henry took advantage of it to seize upon the country. He celebrated, in 1166, the marriage of his son Geoffrey with Constance. Brittany was pacified, but Becket had just excommunicated all those who held the property of the Church, and particularly several of the king's favourites, whom he mentioned by name.

When Henry heard this news, he was at Chinon, near Tours. His anger was so violent that he threw himself upon his bed, tearing the clothes, biting the straw of the mattress and howling with rage. He immediately informed the abbot of Pontigny that if the order of Cistercians wished to retain their property in the provinces dependent on the King of England, he must refuse the shelter of his house to the enemy who so haughtily defied his sovereign. The abbot went and saw Becket. "God forbid that upon such injunctions the chapter should think of sending you away," he said; "consider for yourself what you had better do." The archbishop immediately made preparation to leave the place, and went to the convent of Saint Colomba near Sens, where King Louis had ordered that he should be received (1168).

Up to this period political considerations had created an ill-feeling between the King of France and the King of England, and in this lay Becket's security; in 1169 similar influences brought them to an understanding. They met at a solemn conference at Montmirail, and when the young princes, Henry's sons, had done homage to the King of France for Normandy, Aquitaine, and Brittany, the case of Becket was considered, and he was ordered to appear before the august assembly. The archbishop was growing weary of his exile, and his protectors were growing weary of defending him. It was therefore hoped that he would tender his submission, in order to end the

struggle. Becket presented himself before King Henry with a grave and modest air; bending his knee, the archbishop said, "My liege, in all the disputes which have taken place between us, I submit to your judgment, as arbitrary sovereign in all points, except the honour of God." Immediately this restriction was uttered, the king burst into a passion, and turning towards King Louis, "Do you know," he cried, "what would happen if I were to accept this reservation? Everything that should displease him would be contrary to the honour of God, and I should lose all power. There have been archbishops at Canterbury much more pious than he, and there have been kings in England less powerful than I; let him only treat me as the least pious of his predecessors treated the smallest of mine, and I shall be satisfied." "Save the honour of God," repeated the archbishop. The assembly cried out aloud that it was past endurance, that the king could ask no less, and that Becket was too exacting. "Do you wish then to be more than a saint?" asked Louis angrily, but he got no further concession; and the two kings remounted their horses without taking leave of the archbishop, whose fate was now very much harder by reason of the estrangement of the King of France. He was reduced to live by alms, until the day when Louis again sent for him. "It is to banish us from his dominions," the clergy said, in alarm; but scarcely had the king seen the archbishop when he threw himself in his arms. "Forgive me, father," he cried, "you are right, we were mistaken; we wished to subject the honour of God to the will of a man. Absolve me." Henry had failed to fulfil his contracts with King Louis, who had thereupon hastened to express his approval of Becket's conduct.

A fresh attempt at a reconciliation broke down in consequence of the king's firm decision never to give to the archbishop the kiss of peace, with which it was usual to ratify all oaths. Meanwhile Prince Henry had been crowned in England, his father wishing to secure the succession to him. Becket's office had been usurped, the young prince having received the crown from the hands of the Archbishop of York. The Pope had returned

to Rome, after the death of the anti-Pope Victor, and the displeasure or favour of the King of England now had fewer attractions or horrors for him. Henry was afraid that he might authorize Becket to excommunicate him personally, and to place his kingdom under an interdict, and he at length yielded, under the advice of the king of France, with whom he had just effected a reconciliation. In the month of July, 1170, the two antagonists met within the confines of Touraine. As soon as the king perceived the archbishop, he came forward, helmet in hand, and accosted him. They conversed in a friendly manner, with a certain amount of their old familiarity, and when they parted from each other, the king said to his courtiers, "I found the archbishop most favourably disposed towards me, and if the feeling were not mutual I should be the worst of men." Within two days of this event the reconciliation took place. Becket bent his knee to the king, who held the stirrup for the archbishop to remount his horse; but the kiss of peace was not given. However, the restitution of the archbishop's property was agreed upon. Henry promised to supply Becket with the money requisite to defray his travelling expenses to England, and the two enemies, apparently reconciled, took leave of each other. "I do not believe that I shall ever see you again," said the archbishop, looking fixedly at the king. "What! Do you take me for a traitor?" cried Henry angrily. The prelate only bowed in answer. He never saw the king again.

The archbishop had proceeded to Rouen, awaiting the money which had been promised to him, and during the sojourn which he was compelled to make in Normandy, he received frequent warnings of the dangers which awaited him on the other side of the Channel. "They will not even allow Becket time enough to eat a whole loaf," said Ranulph de Broc, who had been excommunicated by him; but Becket did not take heed of any warnings. "Even," he said, "if I had to face the certainty of being cut to pieces on the other side of the Channel, I should not turn back on my way. Seven years of absence are sufficient for the pastor and for his flock."

After having waited for four months, he borrowed three hundred livres of the Archbishop of Rouen, and set sail in a small vessel which landed him in Sandwich Bay, whereby he avoided an ambush which had been prepared for him near Dover. A messenger preceded the prelate, bearing letters of excommunication from the Pope against the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Chichester, who had all taken part in the ceremony of the coronation of the young king. The letters were publicly consigned to the three bishops, who were enraged beyond measure. It was on the 1st of December that Becket returned to England, to the great delight of the people, but not a single baron came to meet him. The first who passed were armed and drew their swords; one of the king's chaplains, who had accompanied the primate, was at great pains to quiet them, and to protect Becket on his re-entering his episcopal city. "He gathers serfs round him on his way," said the noblemen, "and leads them with him." The archbishop had come back to Canterbury after having attempted to obtain an interview with the young king, his old pupil, but the latter had refused to see him, and Becket, confined to his diocese, surrounded himself with the poor and the peasants, who constituted a rustic guard round him. Excommunications were still being proclaimed; on Christmas-day, after having begun his sermon with these words, "*Venio ad vos, mori inter vos*" (I come to you to die among you), Becket, reminding his congregation that one of their archbishops had suffered martyrdom, added, "You will perhaps see another suffer in the same manner; but, before dying, I will avenge some of the wrongs done to the Church." He then excommunicated Ranulph and Robert de Broc, his bitter enemies.

Meanwhile the suspended bishops had crossed the sea, to go and lay their complaints before King Henry II., who was still in Normandy. "We throw ourselves at your mercy, in the name of the Church and State, for your peace and for ours. There is a man who is inflaming all England; he marches with troops of armed horsemen and foot-soldiers, prowling around the fortresses, trying to effect an entrance." Henry had never

sincerely forgiven his old favourite, and he was very angry at these accounts of his conduct. "What!" cried he, "does this wretch who has eaten my bread, who came to my court a beggar, upon a lame horse, with all he possessed behind him, insult me with impunity, while not one of the cowards whom I feed at my table dares to deliver me from a priest who is so obnoxious to me."

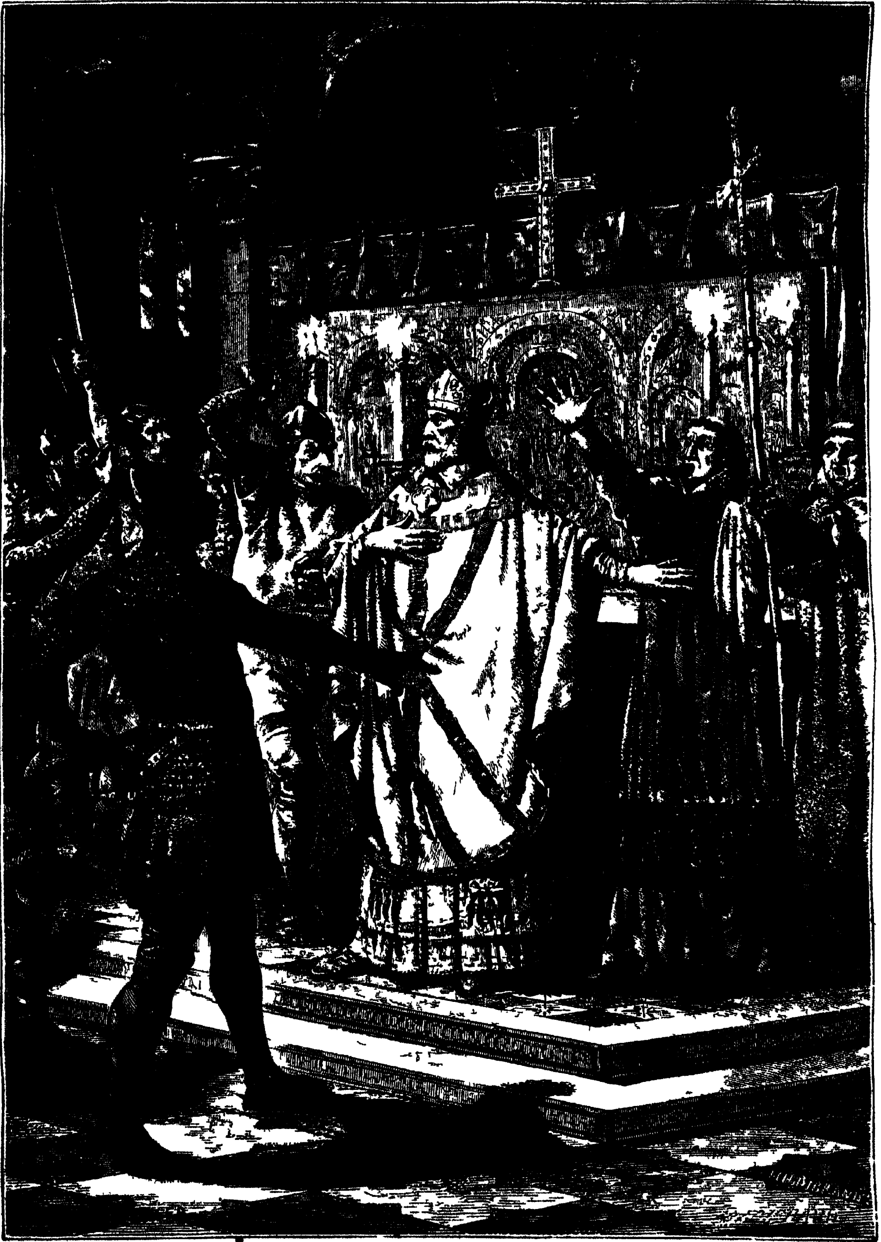
Words like these are always caught up by willing ears. When the king convoked a council of his barons to decide what was to be done with Becket, four of their number were absent—Richard Brito, Hugh de Moreville, William de Tracy, and Reginald Fitzurse. When the king observed that they were not there, he became uneasy, and hastened the departure of the Earl of Mandeville, who was commissioned to arrest Becket. The four conspirators preceded him.

On the 29th of December, in the morning, they arrived at Canterbury, followed by a troop of soldiers whom they had collected together on their way. They wished to secure the help of the mayor of the town, but the latter refused. The knights recommended him at least to keep the townsmen quiet, and they proceeded to the prelate's house with twelve of their friends.

The archbishop was in his room, and the knights sat down on the floor without saluting him and in silence. No one dared begin. The archbishop asked their business. "We have come on behalf of the king," said Reginald Fitzurse, "in order that those you have excommunicated may be absolved, that the bishops who have been suspended may be re-established in their positions, and that you may justify your designs against the king." "It is not I who excommunicated the Archbishop of York," said Becket, "but the Pope himself. As to the others, I will re-establish them if they will tender their submission." "From whom do you hold your appointment as archbishop?" inquired Fitzurse, "from the Pope or from the king?" "My spiritual office I hold by the will of God and the Pope," said the primate, "and my temporal rights from the king." "It is not from the king, then, that you obtain everything?" "No." The knights

were restless, and were twisting their gloves angrily. "I am astonished," said Becket, "that men who formerly swore allegiance to me come into my house to threaten me." "We will do more than threaten," cried the barons. They thereupon retired hastily.

The priests and attendants who surrounded Becket were alarmed; they wanted to close all the doors and barricade the house, begging the bishop to take refuge in the church. He refused. Already the noise of battle-axes rattling against the entrance was heard. Fitzurse was endeavouring to break open the door, which an attendant had shut upon the intruders, who had now come back with their weapons. The bell of the church was ringing for vespers. "Since it is my duty, I will go to the church," said Becket, and, preceded by a priest carrying a cross, he passed slowly through the cloisters and entered the cathedral. The door had not given way, but the conspirators had just entered the palace by the window. The clergy were hastening to close the doors of the church. "No," said the archbishop, "the house of God should not be barricaded like a fortress." He was ascending the steps leading to the choir, when Reginald Fitzurse entered abruptly at the other end of the church. He was brandishing his sword and crying, "Come, loyal subjects of the king." It was late; the movements of the conspirators were scarcely observable, neither could the latter see the priests distinctly. The archbishop was urged to descend into the crypt. He refused and advanced boldly towards the sacrilegious intruders, who were brandishing their swords within the holy precincts. His cross-bearer alone had not fled. "Where is the traitor?" cried a voice. Becket did not answer. "Where is the archbishop?" repeated Fitzurse. "I am here," said Becket, "but no traitor, only a priest of the Lord. What are you here for?" "Absolve all those whom you have excommunicated." "They have not repented, and therefore I cannot." "You shall die then." "I am ready, in the name of the Saviour; but I forbid you, by the Lord Almighty, to touch any of these present, either priests or laymen." At this moment he received between the shoulders a



"I AM HERE," SAID BECKET, "BUT NO TRAITOR, ONLY A PRIEST OF THE LORD"

blow with the flat part of a sword. "Fly," they cried, "or you are a dead man." The archbishop did not stir; the intruders endeavoured to drag him out, not daring to kill him in the sanctuary; he was struggling in their grasp. At length William de Tracy raised his sword and wounded the archbishop in the head, striking down at the same time the hand of Edward Gryme, the brave cross-bearer. Becket had clasped his hands together: "I confide my soul and the cause of the Church to God, to the Virgin Mary, to the patron saints of this church, and to St. Denis," he cried. A second thrust from a sword laid him prostrate upon the ground near St. Bennet's altar; a third blow split his skull, and the sword was broken on the paved floor. "Thus perish all traitors," cried one of the conspirators, and they left the church hurriedly, while the monks were tearfully laying the archbishop's body out at the foot of the altar, taking up his blood in vessels, leaving exposed to view the hair-cloth which he wore, and already revering him as a martyr. But on the morrow they were obliged to bury him in great haste in order to spare his dead body the indignity of being insulted by Ranulph de Broc, who desired to take it away. The Archbishop of York publicly declared that Becket had fallen in his guilt and his pride like Pharaoh, while other bishops maintained that the body of the traitor ought not to lie in consecrated ground, and that he should be thrown into the foulest ditch or be put upon a gibbet to rot. It was forbidden in the churches to speak of him as a martyr.

Decrees are incapable of influencing the development of public opinion; King Henry was the first to discover this. Scarcely had he heard the news, when a profound feeling of repentance for his imprudent words overcame him; he shut himself up in his private apartment, and during three days would not see anybody or take any food. When he awoke from this sullen depression, he immediately sent an ambassador to the Pope, assuring the latter of his innocence and of the grief which the death of the archbishop caused him. At the same time, he hesitated to punish the murderers, who had acted according to his suggestion, and he allowed them the benefit of clergy, the crime

having been committed upon the person of a priest. Thus the liberties of the Church, for which Becket had just died, protected his assassins. It is related that the latter were stricken with remorse in their turn, and that they went and threw themselves at the feet of the Pope, at Rome, who ordered them to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where they died sincerely penitent.

If the story of the repentance of the murderers is not well authenticated, that of Becket's posthumous triumph is incontestable. He had not been buried two years, and King Henry had scarcely obtained forgiveness of the Pope (1172) by undertaking to support, during three years, two hundred horsemen intended for the defence of the Holy Sepulchre, when pilgrims were already proceeding in crowds to Canterbury Cathedral, begging the protection of the martyr, canonized by the public voice before being recognized as a saint by the Church. Two more years elapsed, and on the 10th of July, 1174, the king was proceeding barefooted along the road leading to Canterbury. Each step he made left behind him a spot of blood; he wore a pilgrim's dress, and on his arrival descended into the crypt, and prostrated himself before the tomb. The Bishop of London, from the pulpit, assured the people of the innocence of the king, of the profound grief which the death of the archbishop had caused him, and of the remorse which he experienced for the fit of anger which had caused the commission of the crime; the king remained praying. He rose, uncovered his shoulders, and, passing before the chapter, he received from each monk three strokes from a knotted rope; Henry then returned to the tomb, still fasting and praying. He passed the night in the church, and the morning after, having attended holy mass, he returned to London so exhausted by the fatigue and severity of his punishment that he fell ill on his arrival.

During the anxieties which Henry experienced while he was quarrelling with Becket, he had not neglected external affairs, and a new kingdom had been added to his vast dominions, a kingdom insecurely held, however, as yet, and which was to cost England much blood and many errors before being united

completely to his crown. Henry II. had made the conquest of Ireland.

After having shone with some brilliancy in letters as well as in the history of religious faith, Ireland had for some time past fallen back into a state verging on barbarism. Originally inhabited by different colonies of the Celtic race, she retained institutions analogous to those of the Highlands of Scotland. The clans were called septs, the chief was known as a "Carfinny," and chose his successor or "Tanist" from his own family, without regard to the laws of primogeniture; when the "Carfinny" died the Tanist succeeded him and named his own heir presumptive. The same rule existed in the four kingdoms of Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught. Enmity and rivalry were constant between these princes; of one hundred and seventy-eight kings who ruled over Ireland, seventy-one were killed in war and sixty were murdered. In 1169 the King of Leinster, Dermod MacMorogh, having been driven from his possessions, had applied to Henry II. for assistance, offering to take the oath of allegiance to the English king. But the king was engrossed in his relations with France, and he contented himself with authorizing English warriors to support the cause of Dermod if they chose. Having obtained this permission, a certain number of adventurers went over to Ireland; the most notable of whom was the son of the Earl of Pembroke, Richard de Clare, called Strongbow, who took with him a force of three thousand men. He fought against Dermod's enemies, married that chief's daughter, and had just inherited the kingdom of his father-in-law, when the king, annoyed at his success, wrote for him, recalling him to England. Strongbow immediately crossed the sea and came and threw himself at the king's feet, offering to surrender the town of Dublin to him. Henry's anger was appeased, and he appointed Strongbow to the position of seneschal of Ireland. In the following year the king himself landed in his new dominions with an army so numerous that the Irish soon made a nominal submission. Henry, however, intended not to act as a conqueror; he was taking possession, he said, of Ireland by virtue of an old

bull of Pope Adrian which conferred upon him the sovereignty of this new kingdom by the right which the Popes claimed to exercise over all the islands recognizing the Christian faith. The Irish Bishops answered this appeal by meeting together in council. Several wise measures were adopted for the civilization of the savage regions, where polygamy was still practised, and where dead bodies were not always buried. But Henry did not attempt to impose the English laws upon his new subjects. That portion of Ireland occupied by the Normans was alone assimilated to England; the rest of the country remained subject to its old customs. When Henry returned from thence on the 17th of April, 1173, nominating Hugh de Lacy governor of Ireland, he left behind him territories which his armies had not overrun, and an undisciplined population, who took ad antage of his absence to rebel. The jealousies of the English noblemen established in Ireland still further complicated the difficulties of the government. Harassed by their mutual recriminations, the king would depose, replace, or recall the rivals; disorder reigned in all parts, when, in 1185, the king, having obtained from the Pope the investiture of Ireland for his son John, sent the young prince there with his court. The arrogance, the severity, and the follies of the new sovereign soon caused fresh insurrections. John grew alarmed and returned precipitately to England, leaving to Sir John de Courcy the care of pacifying Ireland; the lieutenant succeeded in this, and, ha ing become Earl of Ulster, he governed the new kingdom with as much firmness as good sense until, at the end of the reign of Henry II., a prosperous state of affairs was inaugurated, to which Ireland had not been accustomed under native kings.

Henry had begun to appropriate Ireland to himself, but without being able to give his personal attention to that country. He was a prey to bitter and ever-increasing embarrassments. The crowning of his son, Prince Henry, had excited in the young man an ambitious spirit which his father-in-law, Louis VII., constantly encouraged. He asked for the immediate cession of Normandy or even of England, in order to be able, he said, to maintain his position and that of the queen his wife. "Wait

until my death," replied the king, "you shall have wealth and power enough." He intended to bequeath England to Henry as well as Normandy, Anjou, and Maine. Aquitaine he designed for Richard, Brittany for Geoffrey, and Ireland for John. The young princes had even already been invested with these magnificent provinces; but, encouraged by their mother, the vindictive Eleanor, to whom Henry II. had always been a good husband, they plotted to seize their inheritance beforehand. In March, 1173, Prince Henry, who had slept with his father at Chinon, found a means of escaping during the night, and of reaching the territory of the King of France. A few days afterwards, his two brothers, Richard and Geoffrey, also escaped, and Queen Eleanor prepared to follow her sons; but she was captured by her husband's emissaries and brought back to England, where she was imprisoned until King Henry's death.

The father had sent to Paris to ask that his son should be given up to him; the ambassadors found the young prince clad in regal robes, seated by the side of Louis VII. "We come from Henry, King of the English, Duke of Normandy and of Aquitaine, Count of Anjou and of Maine," began the messengers. "No," said the king, interrupting them, "King Henry is sitting here, and he has commissioned you to deliver no message. If you wish to speak of the king his father, he is dead since his son wears the crown. If he still has any pretensions to the title of king, I will soon cure him of them." In accordance with these haughty words, the young prince caused a seal similar to that of England to be made, and declared, by letters addressed to the Pope, to his brothers, and to all the great noblemen of England and of the French states, that he was at war with his father in order to avenge the death of Becket, "my foster-father, whose assassins are still safe and sound. I am unable (he added) to bear this criminal negligence, for the blood of the martyr cries aloud in my ears. My father is incensed against me; but I do not fear to offend him when the honour of God is the cause." The Kings of France and Scotland, the Count of Flanders, and a great number of English and Norman noblemen

sided with the conspirators; King Henry began to see himself abandoned by his most intimate friends.

He was a match for his four sons. "The King of England neither rides nor sails," said King Louis, alarmed by the rapidity of his rival's movements; he is believed to be in England, and he is in France; he is believed to be in Ireland, and he is in England." An army of Brabantines had been raised, and King Henry II. had called upon all those monarchs who had sons, to support him in his quarrel; endeavouring to secure their help by the consideration of the disorder which would reign in their own dominions if their own children followed the example set by the English princes. He had implored the Pope to help him to defend the patrimony of St. Peter, as he called the islands of England and Ireland; the pontiff replied by sending legates to put an end to this unnatural struggle; but blood had already been shed. In the month of June, 1173, the Count of Flanders had entered into Normandy; but his brother, who was his heir, having been killed at the first siege, he retired from this impious struggle and re-entered his states. King Louis VII. and Prince Henry were defeated by the Brabantines; Prince Geoffrey did not meet with success in Brittany; a conference convoked at Gisors again excited their animosity. The war was carried on with alternate successes and reverses; the insurrection had spread as far as Aquitaine; the Scots had crossed the frontier, and several towns of England were in the hands of the insurgents, when, in the month of July, 1174, Henry hastily left Normandy. On reaching England he proceeded directly to Becket's tomb. It was on the morrow of his humiliation and repentance, when he was already in his bed, overcome by fever, that it was announced to him that an attendant of Ranulph de Glanville wished to speak with him. The king inquired whether Ranulph, who was one of his intimate friends, was well. "My lord is well," replied the messenger, "and your enemy, the King of Scotland, is in your hands." The king trembled. "Say that again," he said. The man tendered some letters to the king; it appeared that on the 12th of July Glanville had surprised the

King of Scotland, William the Lion, in the neighbourhood of Alnwick, and had made a prisoner of him. This good news effected a cure of the king's disorder; the people again thronged round his standards. In a few days the insurrection was quelled in all parts, and Henry, after this triumph, recrossed the sea with his army to relieve Rouen, which was besieged by the King of France, Prince Henry, and the Count of Flanders. A battle took place under the walls of the town, which was decided in favour of the King of England; the princes were for the time reduced to obedience. Richard resisted for a greater length of time than his brothers; he had acquired a taste for warlike achievements, which were to become the passion of his life, and he thought besides that he was upholding the rights of his mother, to whom he was tenderly attached. But he yielded at length. An interval of peace at length allowed Henry II. breathing time and leisure to organize the great institution which he wished to bequeath to England. It was in 1176 that he definitively established, with the help of his friend Ranulph de Glanville, the courts of justice, where the assizes were regularly held for all the civil and criminal business, and which were presided over by itinerant judges, who made a circuit from town to town to direct the decisions of the knights of the shire who then represented the jury.

Louis VII. was dead. Philip Augustus had ascended the throne (1180), and war was about to break out afresh. King Henry, who was now reconciled to his eldest son, wished to compel Richard to do homage to his brother for the duchy of Aquitaine; the prince refused, saying that he would not compromise the rights of his mother. She was greatly beloved in her hereditary dominions, and the poet Bertrand de Born, powerful among his countrymen, and devoted to Eleanor's cause, was intriguing successively with whichever of the three sons appeared the most incensed against his father. King Henry had caused a picture to be painted representing four young eagles attacking their sire. "If John does not join his brothers," he said sadly, "it is because he is too young."

Richard at length made peace with his father, but Henry and Geoffrey had raised the standard of rebellion in their turn. They had invited the king to a conference at Limoges (1183); when he approached the town he was saluted with a volley of arrows, of which one wounded his horse in the neck. "Ah! Geoffrey," cried the king, "what has your unhappy father done to you that you should thus make a target of him for your arrows?" The prince laughed at this bitter remonstrance. "We cannot live in peace amongst ourselves," he said, "without being in league against my father." His brother Henry was disgusted at this evidence of his brother's hard-heartedness, and joined the king for awhile; but soon after, having been again annoyed, he departed and joined Geoffrey and the Poitevins, who had revolted, when he fell ill at Limoges. In terror, he sent, begging his father to come and grant his forgiveness. The king did not dare to accede to the request; his friends would not allow him to venture into the camp of his sons, who had so recently attempted his life. He contented himself with sending a ring by the Archbishop of Bordeaux, assuring the prince of his forgiveness. The prelate found the young man dying upon a bed of ashes, a prey to remorse and despair. He died pressing to his lips the ring which his father had sent to him, greatly distressed at not having received the benediction upon which he had hitherto set so little value.

A few days afterwards Limoges was taken, and the instigator of the insurrections, Bertrand de Born, was made a prisoner; he was brought before the king to receive sentence; he said nothing, and did not defend himself. "Bertrand," said the king, "you pretend that at no time do you require one-half of your talents; know that in this instance the whole of them would avail you little." "Sire," replied Bertrand, "it is true that I said that, and I told the truth." "And I think that your talents have deserted you," cried Henry angrily. "Ah! Sire," said Bertrand, "my powers deserted me on the day that the brave young king, your son, died; on that day I lost all my powers." The king burst into tears. "Bertrand," he cried, "it is but right that my

son's death should have unnerved you, for he was more attached to you than to anybody else in the world; and I, for love of him, give you your life, your goods, and your castle."

The poet Dante did not forgive Bertrand de Born, as king Henry had done, for he placed him in hell. "I saw," said he, "and I seem to see it still, a headless trunk approach us, and the head being cut off, it held it in one hand by the hair, like a lantern: 'Know that I am Bertrand de Born, who gave bad advice to the young king.'"

In the midst of the general grief a kind of union was effected between the father and his remaining sons, as well as between the father and mother. Eleanor was brought back to Aquitaine, and restored to liberty; but this mutual understanding, so rare in this royal family, only lasted for a short time; Geoffrey asked the king to grant him the countship of Anjou, and on being refused, he retired to the court of France: death awaited him there; he was thrown in a tournament, and trampled under foot by the horse before the attendants could come to his assistance.

Henry had two sons remaining; Richard, who was afterwards called "Cœur-de-Lion," and who had inherited that majestic countenance which Peter of Blois attributes to his father, whose almost square face resembled a lion's head; and John Lackland, as his father laughingly called him, who had not taken part in the revolts of his brothers, and whom Henry esteemed very much for that reason. Richard had already shown fresh signs of insubordination. Eleanor had returned to her prison at Winchester, when a call from the East brought a short truce to the hostilities between France and England. Jerusalem had just been retaken by the Mussulmans (1187); Pope Urban II. had died of grief in consequence. Gregory VIII., who had succeeded him, called the Christians from the West to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Archbishop of Tyre was preaching in favour of the crusade. King Henry was the first to respond to the appeal. Richard assumed the cross as well as his father. Philip-Augustus manifested the same desire. A conference was held under the elm of Gisors, the famous tree

at the foot of which many treaties had been ratified which had remained in force but for a very short time. The treaty of peace which was there agreed to in the name of the crusade proved to be no more durable than the others, and the King of France in his anger caused the tree to be rooted up, saying that no more perfidy should be witnessed under its branches. It was rumoured that the King of England had the intention of bequeathing his kingdom to his youngest son. Richard had another grievance against his father; the latter had for some time been detaining in a castle the Princess Alice of France, who had been promised in marriage to Richard, and far from conniving at the union, he was endeavouring to obtain a divorce from Eleanor, with the intention, it was said, of marrying the young princess himself. Richard demanded an explanation from his father of these two infringements of his rights, asking for his father's consent to his marriage and an acknowledgment of himself as heir to the throne of England.

Henry did not reply; he at length proposed to marry the Princess Alice to John Lackland. Richard was not infatuated with her, for he already dreamt of Berengaria of Navarre; but he looked upon his father's proposal as an indication of his intentions respecting John. "Is it really so," cried he; "I did not think it possible, but now, my friends, you will see what you little expected." And, kneeling before King Philip-Augustus, he placed his hands in that monarch's, and at once did the latter homage for the duchies of Normandy, Brittany, and Aquitaine, as well as for the countships of Poitou, Anjou, and Maine, asking for assistance in recovering his rights. Philip-Augustus accepted him as a vassal and liege, and immediately gave up to Richard the castles which he had taken from the latter's father.

This time the shot had been sent straight to the king's heart, in vain did he retire to Saumur, to recommence preparations for war: his energy and decision had failed him; he awaited the arrival of the Pope's legates, who were entrusted with the care of attempting a reconciliation, and contented himself with rewarding the noblemen of Normandy, who had always remained true

to him. When the legate arrived, King Philip-Augustus, who was too clever not to discover the weariness of the old king, insisted on the conditions of peace offered at the last conference, asking besides that John should accompany his brother in the crusade, without which he threatened to cause the greatest disorder in the kingdom. Henry refused. "Then the truce is at an end," said the King of France. The legate threatened to place the kingdom under an interdict, and to excommunicate Philip and Richard. "I am not afraid of your mercenary anathemas," said Philip; and Richard, drawing his sword, cried, "I will kill any insensate who dares to excommunicate two princes in a single breath!" His friends restrained his violence; the legate remounted his mule and retired in great haste.

The French marched towards Le Mans; the town was taken and pillaged. Aquitaine, Poitou, and Brittany revolted; treason was rife among the English barons. Henry felt that he was beaten; he sued for peace, declaring himself ready to accept the propositions of Philip and of Richard. The two monarchs met upon a plain between Tours and Azay. Richard was not present; while they were conferring in the open field, and still on horseback, the thunder roared and a violent storm broke forth. The nerves of King Henry had been shaken by disease and trouble. He reeled in his saddle, and his servants sustained him with difficulty. When he had recovered his senses, he was too ill to continue the conference, and the proposals for peace were sent to his head-quarters. They were hard and humiliating; an indemnity for King Philip, permission for his vassals to do homage to Richard, the restoration of the Princess Alice to a person commissioned to deliver her with all honour to her brother, or her affianced husband, on the return from the crusade, and so forth. King Henry II. stretched upon his couch, listened in silence. When an end was made he asked to see a list of the barons who had pledged themselves to maintain the cause of Philip and Richard. The first name was that of his son John, count of Mortagne; the unhappy father uttered a cry of pain. "John, the son of my heart," he exclaimed, "for

love of whom I have brought upon myself all these misfortunes —he, too, has betrayed me!" He was assured that it was so. "Let all things henceforth proceed as they will," he said, "I have no longer any regard for myself or this world." And he



turned his face again to the wall in the bitterness of his soul. His son Richard had followed him, and leaning towards him asked for the kiss of peace in ratification of the treaty. The king did not refuse it as he had done before in the case of

Becket; but Richard had scarcely left the chamber when the indignant father muttered between his teeth, "May I live to avenge myself on thee!"

He gave orders to be carried to Chinon, oppressed with a profound melancholy, which was succeeded by a violent fever. In his fits he raised himself in his bed, invoking the vengeance of Heaven upon his children. "Shame, shame upon a vanquished king—a king dispossessed of his rights," he cried; "accursed be the day when I was born; accursed be the children that I leave behind me!" He directed his attendants to carry him into the church, where he expired at the foot of the altar on the 6th of July, 1189. He had not yet completed his fifty-fifth year, but his features were worn like those of an aged man. When Richard, stricken with horror at the intelligence which he had received, hastened to Fontevrault, whither the corpse of his father had been removed without ceremony, some one had surrounded the royal forehead with a golden fringe in imitation of a crown, and it had been necessary to employ hired horses in order to convey to his last resting-place the powerful master of so many dominions.

Richard approached the coffin. A drop of blood appeared under the nostrils of the corpse. "Yes, it is I who have killed him!" cried Richard, stricken with repentance. He fell on his knees beside the dead body of his father, remained there a moment prostrate, then rising, went out precipitately.

Ten years later, when Richard was dying at the siege of Chalus, he ordered that his body should be conveyed to Fontevrault, to be interred at the feet of his father.



CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION.—JOHN LACKLAND.—MAGNA CHARTA. (1189—1216.)

THE first act of the new king was to deliver from her prison his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, to whom he had always been tenderly attached. While she was presiding over the preparations for the crowning of her son, dispensing amnesties, and calling all free men to swear allegiance to him, Richard arrested Stephen of Tours, seneschal of Anjou and treasurer to Henry II., threw him into prison, and did not restore him to liberty until he had been put in possession by him not only of the treasures of the dead king, but of all the personal property of the treasurer as well. On arriving in England, Richard also went in great haste to Winchester, in order to secure the riches which had been amassed there by his father. The Jews were uneasy at seeing the new sovereign display so much avidity; they had been accustomed to suffer for any want of money on the part of kings, and Philip-Augustus had just set the example of confiscation, by driving

them away from his kingdom on his accession (1180), in order to seize their property. Richard contented himself with forbidding them to enter Westminster Abbey; but some wealthy Jews, hoping to secure the favour of the new king by rich presents, ventured to present themselves among the vassals who brought their offerings to Richard. The gifts were accepted, but, after the coronation ceremony, when Richard, having taken the crown from the altar, in token that he held it from God alone, had deposited it in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who placed it upon Richard's head, a noise was heard proceeding from the gates of the churchyard. A Jew who attempted to enter was pushed back; on this disturbance being made, the other Jews were driven away, and then the popular vengeance was wreaked upon their houses, which were set a-fire. A great number of Jews were killed. The fury spread throughout the whole of the country. At York, the unhappy Jews retired into the citadel, where the governor allowed them to take refuge. But he went out one day, and the Jews, fearful of treason, refused to let him re-enter. The fortress was besieged, and when the Jews found themselves about to be taken, they set light to an immense wood-pile, and threw themselves upon it with all their riches, after having themselves slain their wives and children. Richard forbade this persecution of the Jews, but did not cause anybody to be punished; "and this shedding of the Jews' blood," says the old chronicler, "although against the wish of the king, seemed to foretell that Cœur-de-Lion would be a plague to the Saviour's enemies."

Richard appeared for the time being to have become imbued with the commercial spirit of these much despised Israelites. He turned everything into money, selling the royal domains which his father had been at such pains to reconstitute; bartering away towns, castles, and even, sometimes, property which did not belong to him. "I would sell London, if I could find a buyer," he said. The most important offices in the kingdom were disposed of by auction like the domains. Hugh Pudsey, bishop of Durham, bought the county of Northumber-

land and the title of Chief Justicier; the bishoprics and the abbeys were offered to the highest bidder; the King of Scotland was released of the tribute imposed upon him and his people during his captivity, for the sum of 20,000 marks of silver. The crusade which Richard was projecting, and which occupied his whole attention, required considerable sums of money, and the king was not very scrupulous as to the means he adopted for obtaining the money which he wanted.

Prince John, his brother, had just received some very large gifts in Normandy and in England, but he was not nominated regent of the kingdom during Richard's absence; the power was divided between Bishop Pudsey and William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely and Chancellor of England. Many duties were entrusted to Queen Eleanor, and, towards the end of the year 1189, Richard proceeded to Normandy. He had promised to start on the crusade at Easter in 1190. The emissaries of King Philip-Augustus met him at Rouen, and took oath upon the soul of the king their master to a treaty of alliance, both offensive and defensive, between the two sovereigns,—the King of France undertaking to respect and defend the rights of the King of England as he would his good city of Paris; while the English delegates swore, on the soul of the King of England, to perform the same services for King Philip as he would for his good city of Rouen. The Kings of England were still, before all, Dukes of Normandy.

The Queen of France, Isabella of Hainault, had just died, and the departure for the crusade was postponed until Midsummer. The two kings at length met on the plains of Vezelay, accompanied, it is said, by a hundred thousand crusaders. They marched across the country together as far as Lyons, and then separated, after having made an appointment to meet at Messina. Philip marched towards Genoa, where he expected to find those of his vessels which were destined for foreign service. Richard was going to Marseilles; his fleet was to come and meet him there. England was no longer at the mercy of the Genoese or Venetian merchants, being in

possession of a considerable number of vessels. But the English ships were delayed; they experienced some mishaps in the Bay of Biscay; some had sought shelter in Portugal. Richard became impatient, and hiring some mercantile barks, he set out with a portion of his forces, in order to arrive sooner at Messina to meet the King of France. But the English ships sailed faster than the Marseilles barks; when the king arrived in Sicily, his fleet had preceded him.

The kingdom of Sicily had for some time lost its sovereign, William the Good, brother-in-law to King Richard, and his cousin Tancred, Count of Lecce, had been elected king in his stead. The dowager queen, Joanna, Richard's sister, claimed her jointure, which Tancred held unjustly, as she said. Scarcely had Richard set foot in Sicily when, without waiting for the negotiations to be made, he took possession of the castle and of the town of Bagnara, and established his sister there, who had arrived before him; then returning to Messina, he drove the monks from a convent which suited his purposes, and converted it into a barracks. So many outrages roused the people, who shut the gates against Richard's troops. A conference was being held in the camp of Philip-Augustus for adjusting this difference, when a fresh quarrel broke out between the Sicilians and the English troops. Richard left the royal tent in great haste, assembled his men, and running helter-skelter among the citizens, he entered Messina and planted his banner upon the ramparts. Philip-Augustus at once demanded that his own banner should also be planted there; but Richard consented to give up the town into the hands of the knights templars, pending the decision respecting his sister's pretensions, and King Tancred hastened the negotiations, being anxious to rid himself of so turbulent and formidable a guest. Queen Joanna obtained a large sum of money, and King Richard received his share of it, which he scattered broadcast amongst the crusaders, thus finding favour with the French as well as the English, the Normans, and the Aquitanians.

Philip-Augustus, courageous and bold as he was when

necessary, did not possess in as great a degree as the King of England, the brilliant qualities which then constituted a true knight; he was more prudent and cunning than Richard; perhaps he was even given to dissimulation, for Tancred accused him before the King of England of having endeavoured to dissuade him from negotiating with Richard; and when the latter came and complained angrily to Philip, a quarrel was about to break out between the two brothers in arms, who had sworn to help each other in the holy enterprise. Richard thereby gained permission, accorded to him by the King of France, to marry whoever he chose instead of the Princess Alice, the sister of Philip-Augustus. It was high time for Richard to disengage himself from previous contracts, for Queen Eleanor was to bring back to her son the Princess Berengaria, whom she had been to Navarre to fetch. They were only waiting until the departure of Philip to celebrate the marriage. Bad weather had prolonged the stay of the King of France at Messina until Lent, and Richard's marriage with Berengaria had not yet been solemnized when Philip left Sicily, on the 30th of March, 1191, upon his ship "Franc-la-Mer," at the head of more than two hundred vessels. The Queen of Sicily took the young princess away with her.

The weather was unfavourable, and the fleet was dispersed. When King Richard, suffering from sea-sickness, landed at Rhodes, he was almost alone, and he learnt that the vessel, the "Lion," with the princesses on board, had been driven ashore on the coast of Cyprus; the governor of the island, or, as he called himself, the Emperor Isaac Comnenus, had not allowed them to disembark; the sailors who had ventured to land had even been ill-treated.

Much less provocation would have sufficed to arouse the anger and vengeance of Cœur-de-Lion. He immediately left Rhodes, sailed to Cyprus, took possession of the island, and made prisoners of the emperor and his daughter, gave the latter to Berengaria for an attendant, and placed Isaac Comnenus in silver chains, which the latter wore until his death. Richard



RICHARD WENT AND TORE IT DOWN WITH HIS OWN HANDS.

was married in the church of Limasol on the day after Easter, in order to set out immediately for Acre, the siege of which town had already commenced, in spite of the plague, which was decimating the army.

The prowess of King Richard soon attracted towards him the eyes of the crusaders and of the Mussulmans themselves. Stricken with the fever, he would cause himself to be carried upon a litter to the ramparts, and would there direct the movements of the troops. He distributed among the knights the money taken at Cyprus. The jealousy of King Philip gained ground day by day. Accustomed to consider himself superior to the King of England, who was his vassal, Philip was annoyed at seeing his own authority lessened in consequence of the prodigious valour of Richard, the "king," as he was called everywhere in the East, in defiance of the rights of the King of France.

The French knights and their adherents on the one hand, the English knights and their allies on the other, had vainly endeavoured to take the town by storm. Saladin, the sultan of the Arabs, kept aloof, watching for an opportunity to relieve Acre. But the Christian army completely surrounded it—"as the eyeball the eye," say the oriental historians—so completely, in fact, that at the moment when the chiefs of the Christian army, temporarily reconciled, were preparing to attack the town in unison, the Mussulman garrison surrendered, their lives being spared, on the 12th of July, 1191, and Saladin retired into the interior of the country. Philip and Richard immediately entered Acre at the head of their armies, and planted their banners upon the ramparts. The King of England had taken possession of the sultan's palace, without troubling himself to find a residence for Philip, and when he learnt that the Archduke of Austria, Leopold, had set up his banner at the side of the standard of England, he went and tore it down with his own hands, and threw it into the trenches, indignantly asking how a duke could have any pretensions to the honours exclusively reserved for kings. Richard was destined to pay dearly for these haughty proceedings.

Scarcely had the crusaders entered Acre when King Philip announced his intention of returning to Europe. In vain was he urged to persevere in the holy enterprise; in vain his emissaries who were entrusted to announce this news to King Richard were so ashamed of it that they wept and said nothing. Philip insisted on returning to France, which country he would have been wise not to have left in the preceding year. Ten thousand French crusaders remained in the East, under the command of the Duke of Burgundy. The King of France solemnly swore not to make any attempt upon Richard's dominions, and set sail on the 31st of July, leaving the Christian army a prey to the dissensions to which the succession to the throne of the still unconquered city of Jerusalem gave rise. Sybil, granddaughter of Godfrey of Bouillon, had just died, and her husband, Hugh of Lusignan, was one of the two pretenders to the title of King of Jerusalem, the other being Conrad of Montferrat, husband of Isabella, sister of Sybil. The King of France espoused the cause of Conrad, and Richard supported Lusignan. It was in the midst of these differences that the crusaders, under the command of the King of England, commenced a march across the desert of Mount Carmel. Exhausted by the heat, they were also harassed by the Arab horsemen, who were more embittered than ever against the Christians, for the term fixed for the exchange of prisoners having gone by without Saladin's having sent back those in his possession, the King of England had caused all the Mussulman prisoners to be led out of the camp and to be slaughtered before the sultan's eyes. The soldiers even went as far as searching the entrails of their victims for any gold or precious stones which they might have swallowed.

A great battle was fought at Arsouf on the 7th of September; King Richard performed prodigies of valour and opened up a road to Jaffa. Saladin was at Ascalon, when the crusaders, who had arrived at Bethany, were compelled to give up their intention of laying siege to Jerusalem on account of the bad weather. The sultan at once abandoned Ascalon, dismantling the ramparts, and thus making the way clear for Richard. The

latter hastened to repair the fortifications. In order to encourage the soldiers, he himself carried stones to the workers, and urged the Archduke Leopold to do likewise. "I am not the son of a mason," replied the Austrian, whereupon Richard, in a fit of passion, struck him in the face. Leopold at once left the army and set out to return to his states, followed by his soldiers.

In vain was Ascalon fortified; in vain did Richard agree to confer the crown of Jerusalem upon Conrad of Montferrat, in the hope of re-establishing a mutual understanding in order to be able to march against Jerusalem. That prince was almost immediately murdered by two emissaries of the "Old Man of the Mountain," a mysterious sovereign, whose devotees, intoxicated by the fumes of haschich, blindly obeyed his orders. This crime was attributed to the King of England, who afterwards quarrelled with the Duke of Burgundy, depriving himself of the support of the French as he had previously deprived himself of that of the Austrians. They had again advanced as far as Bethany, and a band of crusaders had ascended a mountain overlooking Jerusalem. King Richard was asked to come and see the holy city in the distance. "No," said he, covering his face with his cloak; "those who are not worthy of conquering Jerusalem should not look at it." The crusaders retraced their steps as far as Acre.

On arriving at that town, Richard suddenly learnt that Saladin was besieging Jaffa. He embarked at once and sailed to the rescue. The crescent already shone upon the walls, but a priest who had cast himself into the water in front of the royal vessel told Richard that he could yet save the garrison, although the town was already in the hands of the enemy. The ship had not yet reached the landing-stage, and already the king was in the water, which reached his shoulders, and was uttering the war cry, "St. George!" The infidels, who were busy plundering the city, took fright, and three thousand men fled, pursued by four or five knights of the cross. The little corps of Christians intrenched themselves behind planks of wood and tubs; ten tents held the whole of the army. Day had scarcely dawned, when a soldier flew to Richard's bedside. "O king!

we are dead men!" he cried; "the enemy is upon us." The king sprang up from his bed, scarcely allowing himself time to buckle on his armour, and omitting his helmet and shield. "Silence!" he said to the bearer of the bad news, "or I will kill you." Seventeen knights had gathered round Cœur-de-Lion, kneeling on the ground, and holding their lances; in their midst were some archers, accompanied by attendants who were recharging their arquebuses. The king was standing in the midst. The Saracens endeavoured in vain to overawe this heroic little band; not one of them stirred. At length, under a shower of arrows, the knights sprang on their horses, and swept the plain before them. They entered Jaffa towards evening, and drove the Mussulmans from it. From the time of daybreak, Richard had not ceased for a moment to deal out his blows, and the skin of his hand adhered to the handle of his battle-axe. The remembrance of this day had not faded when, more than fifty years later, St. Louis led the French troops to the crusade. Joinville heard the Saracen mothers scolding their children and threatening them with Malek-Rik, a name which the Mussulmans gave to King Richard. Such severe fatigue under the burning sun had affected the health of Cœur-de-Lion. Disquieting news came from his dominions. He concluded a truce with Saladin, giving up Ascalon to him, but keeping Jaffa, Tyre, and the fortresses along the coast, and promising to refrain from any hostilities during a period of three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours. "Then I will come back," said Richard, "with double the number of men that I now possess, and will reconquer Jerusalem." Saladin smiled, acknowledging, however, that if the Holy City was to fall into the hands of the Christians, no one was more worthy of conquering it than Malek-Rik. The two adversaries had conceived for each other a feeling of chivalrous admiration and esteem which is the theme of Sir Walter Scott's novel "The Talisman." Numerous presents had been exchanged by them during the war; and when Richard was suffering from fever, and was perishing with thirst, he received each



"OH, HOLY LAND!" CRIED HE.

day fruits and cooling drinks which were sent to him by the sultan.

It was on the 9th of October, 1192, that Richard Cœur-de-Lion left Palestine. Standing upon the poop of his ship, he was surveying the shore, then fading from sight. "Oh! Holy Land," cried he, "I leave you to God, as well as your people. May He help me to come back to your assistance!" The English ships were sailing together, when a storm arose and dispersed them. The one which carried the two queens arrived in Sicily, but King Richard was not with them, and no one knew what had become of him. Driven at first towards the island of Corfu, he had hired three small vessels, which had taken him to Zara, whence he hoped to reach his nephew Otho of Saxony, son of his sister Matilda. He found himself surrounded by enemies and threatened on all sides. He knew that King Philip had entered into a league with John Lackland, in order to deprive him of his kingdom; the Emperor Henry had laid claim to the throne of Sicily, and had not forgiven Richard for his alliance with Tancred; Leopold of Austria had not abandoned all hope of revenge, and everywhere the relations of Conrad of Montferrat were accusing the King of England of having been the cause of the death of their ally. Richard assumed the garb of a merchant and started on his journey through the mountains of the Tyrol. He arrived at Goritz in Carinthia, where he sent and asked for a passport for Baldwin of Béthune, one of his knights, and for Hugh the merchant. The messenger was instructed at the same time to present the governor with a ring which the merchant sent him. The governor scrutinized the messenger. "You are not speaking the truth," cried he. "It is not a merchant who sends me this ring, but King Richard. But as he honours me with his gifts without knowing me, although I am the cousin of Conrad of Montferrat, I will do him no injury. Tell him, however, to leave this place as soon as possible."

The governor of Goritz did not wish to arrest King Richard, but he had not promised to keep the secret. He informed

Frederick of Montferrat, Conrad's brother, that Cœur-de-Lion was about to travel across his dominions. Recognized by a Norman knight, the king was saved by a faithful vassal, and had arrived in the states of the Duke of Austria, when he fell ill in the village of Erperg, a short distance from Vienna. A page was despatched to the capital to exchange some gold bezants for current coin of the country. He was noticed and interrogated, and being put under torture he divulged his master's name. Richard was stretched upon his bed, sleeping, when the mayor of Vienna entered his little apartment. "Good morrow, King of England," he said. "You hide in vain, for your face betrays you."

The king had already seized his sword, protesting that he would only surrender to the duke himself. Leopold was unwilling to let any one else have the honour of making the capture; he soon arrived, and received the King of England's sword. "You should esteem yourself fortunate, Sire," said the duke, with a smile of revengeful satisfaction; "if you had fallen into the hands of the relations of Conrad of Montferrat you would have been a dead man, even if you had had a thousand lives." And triumphantly leading forth his prisoner, whom he reminded on the road of the insult which had been formerly offered to the Austrian flag, he shut Richard up in the castle of Diernstein. But the emperor at once claimed the illustrious captive. "A duke cannot possibly keep a king!" he urged; "it is the right of an emperor." And Richard was conducted to the castle of Treefels, where he languished for two years.

While King Richard had been acquiring glory in Palestine, without any signal advantage gained to the Christian cause, disorder reigned supreme over his kingdom; the Chancellor Longchamp had seized upon the power, casting his fellow-bishop of Durham into prison, and only setting him free at the price of all the dignities which the latter had bought of Richard. The chancellor was able and devoted to the king, but haughty, arrogant, despotic, and, above all, rapacious, as all powerful men

were at that time. "If he had remained master," say the chronicles, "he would not have left a belt to the men, a bracelet to the women, a ring to the knights, or a jewel to the Jews." But scarcely had King Richard arrived in Palestine when Prince John unmasked himself. Having raised an army against the chancellor, he claimed the supreme authority on the ground of his being heir presumptive to the crown, resolutely refusing to recognize the rights of Arthur of Brittany, son of Geoffrey, whom Richard had repeatedly nominated as his successor. Badly supported by the barons, Longchamp was beaten, and compelled to agree to a truce. By means of intrigue and concessions, John first of all caused himself to be recognized by the regent and the council as heir to the throne, then obtained the deposition of the chancellor, and saw himself raised to the dignity of Governor-General of the kingdom. It was on the 9th of October, 1191, while King Richard was fortifying the town of Jaffa, after the victory of Ascalon. The new regent offered to allow Longchamp to keep his diocese of Ely, and have the governorship of three royal castles. "No," said the deposed chancellor, "I will not willingly give up any of my master's rights; but you are stronger than I, and chancellor and chief justicier as I am, I yield to superior power." He consigned the keys of the Tower to Prince John, and made preparation for leaving England. No doubt he knew the prince too well not to fear some treachery, for he disguised himself as a travelling tradeswoman, and, accompanied by a large number of boxes, he waited near Dover for the ship which was to carry him to France. The vessel was delayed; some fishermen's wives, passing along the beach, asked if they might look at his goods; but the Chancellor of England did not understand English, but only spoke Norman, and therefore could not answer; the women, being impatient, declared that the owner of the boxes must be a mad woman, and raised her veil. They started back at seeing a man's face underneath it. The fishermen rushed to the spot; and, suspecting some sinister purpose in the disguise, they subjected Longchamp to ill-treatment until the officers of the guard

came, tore him from their grasp, and took him to prison. The Chancellor had much difficulty in getting free again, and in obtaining permission to proceed to France. The Archbishop of Rouen was created chancellor and chief justicier in his stead.

It was in the month of October, 1192, when King Richard was just setting sail from Acre, that rumours of his approaching return were spread throughout Europe; but in vain did days, weeks, months elapse. The champion of the Cross, Cœur-de-Lion, had disappeared, and his fate remained shrouded in mystery, when, at the beginning of the year 1193, a letter from the Emperor Henry VI. to the King of France, discovered by accident, revealed the fact of Richard's incarceration in Austria. "The enemy of the Empire and the disturber of France," said the Emperor, "is imprisoned in a castle in the Tyrol, and watched day and night by faithful guards with naked swords." The exact whereabouts of the castle remained a secret.

The effect of this news in Europe was wonderful; Richard's reputation had caused people to forget his pride and avarice. Prince John was as proud and as avaricious as his brother, without the fitful generosity and brilliant valour which in Richard compensated for so many faults: the clergy remembered the great deeds performed for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre; all the noblemen and knights were disgusted at the treachery which kept a king and a crusader in an unknown prison; the Pope excommunicated the Archduke Leopold, and threatened the Emperor with the same penalty; Prince John and the King of France alone rejoiced at the powerless state in which their enemy found himself. The prince hastened to Paris to do homage to Philip for all the dominions which the King of England held upon the Continent; and then, recrossing the Channel, he commenced preparations for raising an army, to enable him to dispute his brother's claim to the crown; but already the barons and prelates who remained faithful to Richard had unfurled the royal standard; the hired soldiers gathered together by John were repulsed, and the feeble usurper was compelled to consent to an armistice. His ally of France

had been unsuccessful at Rouen, which was defended by the Earl of Essex, who had recently arrived from Palestine. Philip had been compelled to quit that town.

The ex-Chancellor Longchamp had at length discovered the king's prison, and had gone to see him. He managed to induce the emperor to convoke the Diet of the Empire at Hagenau, in order to hear the charges against Richard. The King of England appeared before the princes there assembled, and cleared himself easily of the accusations brought against him. The emperor consented to deliver him up for a ransom; the sum fixed was a hundred and fifty thousand marks of silver. The king's fetters were removed, and he was led back to his prison, there to remain until the united efforts of his people should raise the required sum of money. "My brother John will never gain a kingdom by his valour!" Cœur-de-Lion had disdainfully declared on hearing of that prince's treachery. But John could plot, and, supported by Philip Augustus, he contributed greatly towards postponing the deliverance of his brother. Richard was still languishing in prison at the beginning of the year 1194, lamenting his fate in Provençal ballads, which may be translated thus :—

Now know ye well, my barons, people, all,
English and Norman, Gascon and Poitevin,
That for no money would I leave in thrall
The poorest of my comrades thus to pine.
Reproach I made not nor desire withal,
Though now two winters here.

The period of his captivity was at length, however, drawing to an end; in vain did Philip-Augustus and Prince John propose to the Emperor Henry a much larger sum than Richard's ransom if he would still keep the latter in prison. The princes of the Empire opposed the offer indignantly, and when the first half of the ransom arrived, in the month of February, 1194, the king was at length restored to liberty. He landed at Sandwich on the 13th of March, to the great delight of his subjects. Prince John had taken refuge in Normandy, and the other traitors had disappeared. Richard seized upon several castles, deprived several

rebels of their offices, and sold them to the highest bidder; then, levying another tax upon a country exhausted by war and by the payment of the royal ransom, he hastened to France, to punish her king for the injuries inflicted upon him by that monarch. On disembarking, Richard was met by his brother, who reckoned upon the intercession of his mother to obtain the forgiveness of the sovereign whom he had so cruelly wronged. "I forgive him," said Richard; "and I hope that I shall forget his misdeeds as completely as he will forget my forgiveness." He refused, however, to reinstate John in his land and castles.

War was still raging between the two monarchs, with variable success. Richard was enabled to wreak his vengeance upon the Bishop of Beauvais, who had formerly been entrusted with missions from Philip to the Emperor of Germany. That prelate, having been made a prisoner during a battle, by Merchadec, chief of the Brabantines in Richard's service, was imprisoned in the castle of Rouen. In vain did he implore the intervention of Pope Celestine III. in his favour; the King of England sent the armour, stained with the bishop's blood, to the Pontiff, with this quotation from Scripture: "See whether it is your son's garment." The Pope laughed. "It is the coat of a son of Mars," said he, "let Mars undertake to deliver him," and the bishop remained in prison until the death of King Richard.

So many struggles were necessarily burdensome; "from sea to sea England was ruined," say the chroniclers. A citizen of London, William Fitz-Osbert, better known by his title of "Longbeard," constituted himself the champion of the poor, endeavouring, first of all, by interceding with the king, to obtain a lessening of the burdens which were crushing them. The king wanted money. Longbeard achieved no result; and came back to England, where he organized a secret association. He began a series of public orations, causing dangerous riots in London, where he was looked upon by the people as their king and saviour. The authorities endeavoured to arrest him, but he took refuge in the church of St. Mary of the Arches, with a few supporters, where he defended himself until the building being

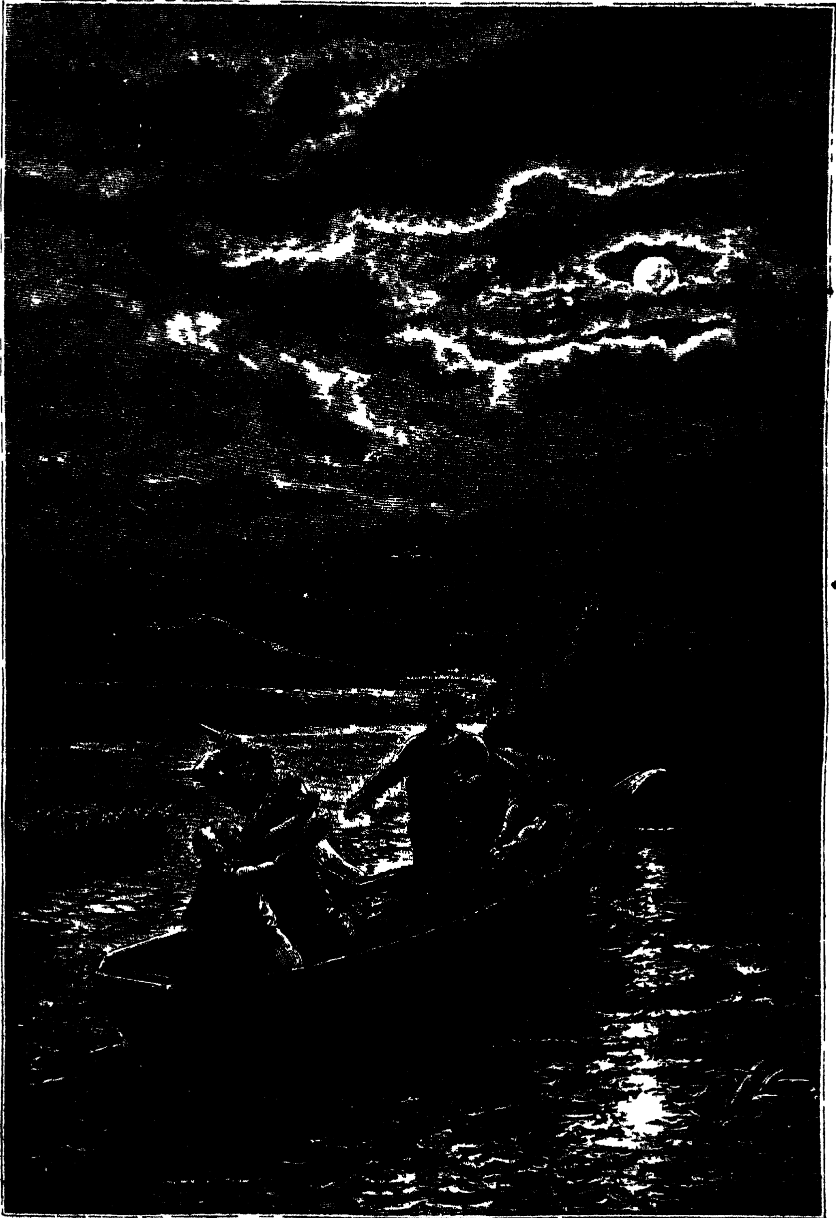
set afire he was obliged to leave it; he was wounded, captured, and dragged to Smithfield, where he was hanged. The people had done nothing to rescue him; but it was found necessary to punish the fanatics who came by night to scrape up the earth at the foot of his gibbet, to be preserved as relics.

King Richard had defeated Philip-Augustus at the gates of Gisors. Whilst making his escape, the King of France had almost been drowned in the river. "I made him drink the water of the Epte," Richard wrote triumphantly. But the day was approaching which was to see the end of so many heroic, but fruitless struggles; it was rumoured in Normandy that an arrow was being fashioned in Limousin, which was destined to kill a tyrant. The King of England learnt that his vassal, the Viscount of Limoges, had discovered a treasure. He at once sent to claim it of the Viscount, who sent him one-half of his treasure trove upon a mule. "Gold treasure belongs to the liege-lord; silver is divided," said the Viscount. But Richard wanted the whole; he marched against the castle of Chalus, where he expected to find the treasure, and laid siege to the place. It was well defended, but provisions had run short; the garrison wished to capitulate. "No," said Richard, "I will take your place by storm, and cause you all to be hanged on the walls." The defenders of the town were in despair; the king and Merchadec were examining the point of attack, when a young archer, Bertrand de Gourdon, pulled his bow, and, praying to God to direct the arrow, aimed it at the king; the latter was struck on the left shoulder. The town, however, was taken by assault, and all the garrison were hanged. The king sent for Gourdon. He was dying, for an unskilful surgeon had broken the arrow, and left the steel portion in the wound. "Wretch!" said he to the archer, "what had I done to you that you should have attempted my life?" "You have put my father and two brothers to death," said Bertrand, "and you wanted to hang me." "I forgive you," cried Richard, "let his chains be removed, and let him receive one hundred shillings." Merchadec took no heed of the royal pardon, but caused Bertrand de Gour-

don to be flayed alive. Gourdon's children fled to Scotland, and became, it is said, the founders of the illustrious family of the Gordons. Richard died on the 6th of April, 1199. Scarcely had he breathed his last, when his sister Joanna, whom he had married to the Count of Toulouse, arrived at the camp before Chalus, to solicit help for her husband in his dispute with the court of Rome, in the matter of the Albigenses. She was informed of the death of her brother, and the shock caused her to give birth to a child prematurely. The child was stillborn, and the mother died in delivering it. She was buried with her brother at Fontevraud, at the foot of the grave of Henry II.

The period of chivalric enterprises in England had gone by, and that of humiliation and decay was commencing. The reign, however, of John Lackland, the most cowardly and treacherous of the sovereigns who have sat on the throne of England, is one of the most important epochs in history, for from that time dates the active part played by the nation in its own affairs—the time of Magna Charta, the germ and foundation of all English liberty.

John was well known by the people whom he aspired to govern, and was universally detested. Scarcely had the rumour of the death of King Richard spread through France, when all the nobility of Brittany, Touraine, Anjou, and Maine declared themselves in favour of Prince Arthur, son of Geoffrey Plantagenet and of Constance of Brittany, born seven months after his father's death, whom Richard had repeatedly nominated as his successor. Under the influence of Eleanor, Aquitaine and Poitou recognized John as their liege-lord: he was in Normandy, and caused himself to be proclaimed at Rouen on the 25th of April. He had already sent the Archbishop of Canterbury back to England, to bring together all the barons, and to make them swear allegiance to John, Duke of Normandy, son of King Henry, son of the Empress Matilda. The repugnance felt towards him was very general, but the fear of anarchy decided several noblemen in favour of John; promises and presents influenced others, and, on the 25th of May, 1199, when John arrived in England, the greater number of the barons had become reconciled to his cause.



MAULAC PLUNGED HIS DAGGER INTO THE PRINCE'S HEART

The new king was crowned on the 27th of May at Westminster, the primate proclaiming aloud that the crown of England was not an inheritance descending by right of primogeniture, but that it belonged to the worthiest claimant. The worthiest claimant on this occasion was Prince John.

There had been no question raised about the rights of Arthur; but Philip-Augustus was too shrewd not to seize this pretext for renewing the war against John, whom he knew to be a coward, a sluggard, and a sovereign unpopular in his kingdom; he claimed, therefore, in the name of the young prince, whose mother had placed him under the royal protection, nearly all King John's continental domains. Hostilities recommenced, and Britanny was ravaged both by its enemies and friends; but the King of France was engaged in a serious dispute with the Pope; his kingdom had just been placed under an interdict; he concluded peace with John, sacrificing, without remorse, the interests of Arthur, who found himself completely disinherited through the mutual understanding between his uncle and the King of France.

Meanwhile John had started out for Aquitaine, there to receive the homage of his subjects. He met, at one of the *fêtes* which were celebrated, Isabel, daughter of the Count of Angoulême and wife of the Count of Marche; she was remarkably beautiful, and as ambitious as she was beautiful. Her beauty attracted the king, and the ambition of the countess prompting her, she abandoned her husband to marry John Lackland, who himself had been married for ten years to the daughter of the Earl of Gloucester. An insurrection soon broke out in Aquitaine; it was insignificant at first, but at the beginning of the year 1202 Philip-Augustus, delivered from his quarrels with Pope Innocent III., stirred the flame of the rebellion in the southern provinces, organized an insurrection in Brittany, and suddenly took up Arthur's cause again, who had recently lost his mother. "You are aware of your rights," he said to the young prince, "do you wish to become king?" "Decidedly I do," said Arthur. "Very well then," said Philip, "there are two hundred knights, take them and march against your own provinces whilst

I enter into Normandy." The Bretons rallied round their young duke, who advanced with his little army against the town of Mirebeau in Poitou, where his grandmother Eleanor was staying, whom his mother had taught him to hate. He hoped, by capturing her, to obtain better conditions from his uncle; but the old queen defended herself valiantly, and held the castle sufficiently long to allow her son to come to her assistance. A nobleman of the country delivered up the town to him on the night of the 31st of July, 1202, on King John's promising not to do any harm to his nephew. All the noblemen who supported the young duke, amongst whom was the Count of Marche, were made prisoners, and Prince Arthur himself was imprisoned in the Castle of Falaise, whence he was transported a short time afterwards to Rouen. There all trace of him is lost in history, and no information concerning him exists except vague and contradictory tradition. The most probable story relates that the king arrived by night with his esquire, Peter of Maulac, to see the unfortunate young prince in his dungeon, and that he took the latter with him in a little boat upon the Seine. The young man was in fear, and begged his uncle to spare his life; but John made a sign and De Maulac, after plunging his dagger into the prisoner's heart, threw his body overboard; but it is also said that De Maulac conceived a horror of the crime beforehand and refused to commit it, and that the king himself struck the fatal blow. It was on the 3rd of April, 1203; rumours of the murder spread throughout France and England, adding fresh indignation to the hatred which John already inspired. The Bretons proclaimed Alice of Thouars, daughter of the Duchess Constance by her third husband, instead of Prince Arthur's sister, Eleanor, the Pearl of Brittany, who was in the power of her uncle, and was shut up by him in a convent at Bristol. The appeal of the Bretons to the liege-lord was listened to by Philip-Augustus; he summoned John, Duke of Normandy, to appear in Paris to be judged by his peers. Queen Eleanor had retired to Fontevraud, where she had taken the veil, overcome, it is said, with despair in consequence of her son's crime.

John had not answered Philip's summons: he was at Rouen, occupied with the festivities, while the King of France was entering Poitou, supported by the nobility, who had generally revolted in his favour, and was marching from thence into Normandy; the Bretons had commenced the attack, and were advancing, pillaging the country. Many Normans joined them, so great was the horror inspired by the murder of Prince Arthur. The people had also organized an insurrection in Anjou and Maine, and Philip had taken possession of all the towns on his way when he effected a junction with the Bretons at Caen. "Let them go where they please," John would say in the midst of his revels, "I will take back in one day all that they have acquired with so much trouble." But the French army having appeared at Rodepont, in the neighbourhood of Rouen, the King of England fled in great haste and recrossed the Channel in the month of December, 1203, in order to seek for succour.

The English reinforcements did not arrive; Rouen had defended itself valiantly; but the citizens had at length yielded in consequence of a famine; Verneuil had just been taken; Castle Gaillard, fortified by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, capitulated after a siege of seven months; the garrison had defended tower after tower; there no longer remained a single French knight, when the French soldiers at length destroyed the last portion of the ramparts. John had not lifted a finger to defend his dominions, and the King of France was regaining possession of his duchy of Normandy, which had been separated from his dominions for two hundred and ninety-two years; Brittany, Touraine, Anjou, Maine, and Poitou slipped from the grasp of the King of England; Aquitaine alone remained to him. King Philip, who was now satisfied, allowed himself to be persuaded by a legate sent by the Pope and concluded a truce of two years' duration with King John, which was to commence in the month of December, 1206.

The arms of his temporal enemies had triumphed. John Lackland was about to bring down upon himself the spiritual thunders; a conflict had arisen between the king and the chapter of Canterbury about the election of an archbishop. The Pope

settled the question by nominating Cardinal Stephen Langton, who was then at Rome, and whose merit was known to the pontiff. The monks of Canterbury recognized him, and John caused them to be driven from their cloisters by two knights, sword in hand. The Pope instructed the three bishops to pronounce an interdict in England, authorizing at the same time the English barons, who were, he knew, secretly discontented, to aid him in snatching their country from ruin. The bishops pronounced the terrible sentence, and at once left King John's dominions. The barons did not dare to rebel; the king had taken possession of a large number of children of the noblest families as hostages. He had sent Peter of Maulac to demand the sons of William of Braose, Lord of Bramber in Sussex. "By my faith," said the lady of the castle, "he did not take such care of his nephew that I should trust my children to him." Peter of Maulac made prisoners of the lady and her children, who died of hunger in their prison; Lord Bramber died of grief in consequence.

The interdict had lasted one year; the churches were closed. No more bell-ringing, no religious services, no marriages, no prayers over the graves; the baptism of newly born children and the administration of extreme unction were the only concessions made by the Church. In 1209, the pope sent a bull of excommunication against the king; the blow was foreseen, and the approaches were so zealously guarded that the papal missive could not gain admission; but John knew that a sentence of deposition would follow that of excommunication; and this proceeding, although unproductive of practical results in itself, assumed a terrible degree of importance when it was known that King Philip-Augustus was ready to carry it into execution. It is related that at this time John, in despair at his struggle against the Church, conceived the idea of begging the assistance of the Mussulmans, and that he sent an embassy to the Emir El-Hassiz in Spain, proposing to embrace the religion of Islamism and to become the vassal of the Emir, if the latter would cross the Pyrenees, enter into France, and thus draw off the forces of King Philip. The

Emir listened gravely, only giving vague answers. When the emissaries had retired, the Mussulman called back one of them, a priest. "Tell me," he asked him, "in the name of the Lord, from whom you expect your salvation, what kind of man your king really is." "He is a tyrant who will soon feel the effects of his subjects' anger," replied the monk; and the Emir refused all King John's offers.

In spite of the Pope's discontent and John's terror thereat, the latter had carried on successfully some expeditions against the insurgents in Ireland and Wales, when, in 1213, Innocent III. at length proclaimed his deposition, absolving all his vassals from their oath of allegiance, and making an appeal to all Christian princes to dethrone an impious tyrant. Stephen Langton was sent to King Philip to promise forgiveness of all the latter's sins if he would carry out the sentence of the Holy see. The French army was already being formed, King John had obtained a signal success over his adversary's fleet, and he was at Dover surrounded by an army of sixty thousand men ready to encounter the invaders if their sovereign would lead them; but John was afraid of his subjects, mistrusting their fidelity; and he shrank as usual from giving battle to the enemy. The Pope's legate, Pandulph, came and met him at Dover. He represented to the king in the most terrible colours the strength of the French army, the discontent of the barons, and the anger of the exiles; the little courage that remained to the degenerate Plantagenet faded away from his heart. He was, besides, pursued by the recollection of a prediction of Peter the Hermit of Wakefield, which ran: "Before the day of the Ascension the king will have lost his crown." John resolved rather to drag it through the mire than to relax his hold of it.

The legate was a skilful diplomatist; before making public the result of his negotiations with the king he demanded that all the exiled priests should be allowed to return with Langton at their head; and he also exacted an assurance that the clergy and laity would be indemnified for the losses which they had sustained through the interdict. The king signed this agreement on the

13th of May, 1213, and four barons affixed their seals to it. On the 14th John was engaged all day in private conference with the legate.

On the morning of the 15th of May the king rose early and went to the church of the Templars at Dover; a great crowd had already assembled there, and John, kneeling and clasping the hand of the legate in his own, swore in a loud clear voice an oath of allegiance to the Holy See. At the same time he placed in the hands of the pontiff's ambassador a document declaring that he, John, king of England and Ireland, in expiation of his sins against God and the Holy Church, without being constrained thereto by force, or by the fear of the interdict, but of his own free will and with the consent of his barons, ceded to the Holy Pope Innocent and to his heirs and successors for ever, the kingdom of England and dependency of Ireland, to be held by himself John and by his successors as a fief of the Holy Church, by paying an annual sum of a thousand marks of silver. At the same time the king offered a purse as an earnest of his submission. Pandulph threw it on the ground, trampling the money disdainfully under foot, but he accepted the crown which John had relinquished, and for five days it remained in his keeping. The feast of the Ascension had passed, the king caused the Hermit of Wakefield to be tied to the tail of an untamed horse, as a punishment for his predictions; but the people maintained that Peter had not been mistaken, because King John himself gave up his crown.

Scarcely had the legate accomplished his mission in England when he recrossed the sea to Philip's camp at Boulogne, announcing to the latter that the states of his enemy would for the future form part of the dominions of St. Peter, and that the King of France no longer had permission to invade them. "But," said Philip, "I have spent enormous sums of money in the preparations for war at the Pope's bidding, and on his having granted remission of my sins." He resolved to carry on the expedition, and was preparing to set sail, when a quarrel with the Count of Flanders caused him to turn his arms in that direction; the

English fleet came to the assistance of the Count, and gained a brilliant victory over the vessels of Philip, who, finding himself deprived of the means of transport and revictualling, was obliged to renounce, for the time being, his expedition against England.

John had called all his subjects to arms; but when the barons met him at Portsmouth they refused to embark in the ships until the king had allowed the exiles whom he had called back to re-enter the country. Langton was hateful in the eyes of John, who looked upon him as the cause of the first dispute with Rome; but he was obliged to yield, and the archbishop and the monks of Canterbury once more set foot on English soil; the kiss of peace was exchanged, and John embarked, reckoning on the support of the barons. He arrived at Jersey, but the noblemen had not followed him, pleading that the period of their service was at an end, and they met at St. Alban's under the presidency of Chief-Justicier Fitz-Piers, a man of low origin, whose marriage with the Countess of Essex had placed him in a position which he maintained by reason of his ability. They had already published a series of royal declarations demanding the observance of the old laws, when John, furious at the desertion of his vassals, returned, pillaging and burning down everything on his way. The Archbishop of Canterbury came to him. "You are not fulfilling your oath, Sire," said he; "your vassals should be judged by their peers, and not coerced by arms." "Pay attention to your Church," cried the king angrily, "and leave me to govern the kingdom." Langton threatened to excommunicate all the agents of the royal vengeance, and John ended by summoning the barons to appear before him.

Langton, on the other hand, had convoked them at London. When the king entered the audience chamber, the cardinal held in his hand a parchment document. It was the charter of King Henry I.; this was neither the first nor the last charter which England received since the Conquest. William the Conqueror, in 1071, had guaranteed to his barons, by a charter, the performance of a contract entered into between them, promising to reform the abuses which had been pointed out to him, and

securing to the Saxons the maintenance of the laws of Edward the Confessor. In 1101, King Henry I. had lately been proclaimed King of England; the Duke Robert was claiming the throne by virtue of his seniority. In order to secure the support of the Norman, as well as the Saxon barons, Henry had convoked in London a general assembly and signed a fresh charter, almost similar to his brother's. It was this document which Archbishop Langton had found, and which he was bringing to the barons assembled in London like their ancestors, not, as of old, to receive a charter, but to force one upon the king.

King Stephen had also made the same promises, endowing the Church likewise with a charter setting forth its rights. Finally, Henry II., in 1154, had renewed the charters of King Stephen, and had caused a copy of the document to be deposited in all the churches; there is one of them remaining now. Cœur-de-Lion did not sign any charter, but that of John Lackland was destined to be glorious and powerful for ever afterwards under the title of Magna Charta. The barons swore to observe the injunctions of Henry I.'s charter, which had been presented to them by Langton, to remain faithful to one another, and to secure their liberties or to die defending them. This was on the 25th of August, 1213.

The Pope had abandoned the cause of English liberty on receiving homage from King John; the interdict had been raised, and the hostile forces of King Philip were gathering in all directions. The Emperor of Germany, the Count of Flanders, and the Count of Boulogne called the King of England to their aid. John sent William Longsword, earl of Salisbury, his half-bother, to the camp of the allies, and marched in person against Brittany, but he did not come to blows with the heir to the throne of France, Prince Louis, who had been sent forward by his father, on the 27th of July, while the latter was waging war against the confederates at Bouvines. On the 19th of October, John signed a five years' truce, and returned to England furious, humiliated, and resolved to revenge himself upon his English subjects for all the reverses of fortune which he had suffered on the Continent.

Fitz-Piers, whom John feared and detested, was dead. The king burst into laughter on learning this news. "God's teeth!" he cried; "this is the first time that I have felt myself king and sovereign of England." But Langton was the real chief of the conspiracy; the support which the Pope lent to King John had not for a single moment shaken the fidelity of the archbishop to the cause of the barons: they again met, on the 20th of November, at Bury St. Edmund's, and, placing their hands upon the altar, they swore one after another, that if the king refused to grant the just rights which they claimed, they would withhold their allegiance, and wage war against him until he should have granted their demands by a charter sealed with the royal seal.

Christmas-day arrived; the king found himself alone at Worcester, his barons not having presented themselves to do homage to him. John retired in great haste to London, and took refuge in the fortress of the Templars. The barons followed him there this time in larger numbers than he cared for, and on the day of the Epiphany they haughtily presented their requests to him. John eyed the faces which surrounded him, and which bore an inflexible and resolute expression, both in the case of the priests and the warriors. He turned pale. "Give me until Easter to reflect upon all this," he said. Before consenting, the barons stipulated that Cardinal Langton, the Bishop of Ely, and the Earl of Pembroke should become sureties that the king would satisfy their claims upon the day mentioned by him. They knew the value of John Lackland's promises. Scarcely had they left, when he threw himself under the protection of the Church, renouncing all the prerogatives of the throne in the choice of ecclesiastical dignitaries, and, begging the assistance of the Pope, who wrote to Langton, but with no result. At length, John formally assumed the cross, on the 2nd of February, hoping thus to avoid fulfilling his promises to the English barons. He did not yet fully understand his subjects.

On Easter-day the confederates had met together in large numbers at Stamford; they sent a deputation to the king, who was at Oxford. When Langton read aloud the claims of the

barons, John angrily exclaimed, "And why do they not also ask for my crown? By God's teeth! I will not grant liberties which would make a slave of me." The Pope's legate, who was there, maintained that Langton ought to excommunicate the confederates. "The intentions of the Holy Father have been misunderstood," said the archbishop calmly; "if the mercenary followers of the king do not soon leave the kingdom, whose ruin they are accomplishing, it is they whom I will excommunicate." The barons then styled themselves the Army of God and of the Holy Church, and, placing Robert Fitz-Walter at their head, they marched against Northampton Castle. The resistance there was so actively carried on that the siege had to be raised, and the barons advanced towards Bedford. The position of affairs at this time was critical, and it was imperatively necessary to know whether the citizens of the towns would support the noble insurrectionists. Bedford opened its gates, and the confederates took the road to London; they arrived there on the morning of the 24th of May. The people received them joyfully, and good order was maintained in the Army of the Holy Church. The barons issued a proclamation, calling under their banners all the knights who had hitherto remained aloof from the contest. The king found himself unsupported, all the nobility of the kingdom having risen against him. He yielded therefore, at least for a time, to urgent necessity; he sent the Earl of Pembroke to the barons assembled in London to assure them that he was quite ready to grant the privileges and liberties which they claimed, and asking on what day and at what place they would arrange matters with him. "On the 15th of June, at Runnymede," replied the barons.

On the 15th of June all the noblemen of England were there. "It is not necessary to name them," says the chronicle, "for they consisted of all the nobility of the country." Fitz-Walter was at their head; the king was accompanied by the legate, by the Grand-Master of the Templars, by eight bishops brought by Langton, and by twelve barons, of whom the Earl of Pembroke was the chief. The king's followers, with the exception of the

legate and the Templar, were as devoted to the liberties of England as the confederate noblemen.

John did not put in any claim or make any objection; with an amount of alacrity, which must have appeared suspicious to far-seeing observers, he signed the charter which was presented to him, and the great seal was affixed to it. The first real token of English liberty had been acquired; the first stone of the noble edifice of the Constitution was laid; the conditions were well defined; and the rights and interests of the clergy as well as those of the feudal nobility and of the merchants and citizens who had supported the barons in their enterprise were carefully provided for. Effectual guarantees were secured; the necessity for causing persons who were arrested or punished to be tried first of all in a court of justice, the establishment of regular assizes, the maintenance of the integrity of justice, all formed part of the fundamental rights claimed by the barons, who also required the disbanding of the mercenary troops, and the formation of a committee of twenty-five members entrusted with the task of seeing to the fulfilment of all the clauses of the compacts, the non-fulfilment of which gave the barons the right of waging war with the king until their grievances should be completely redressed. During two months the barons were to retain possession of the City of London.

All these precautions were powerless, however, against treachery; scarcely had the triumphant confederates left Runnymede when King John flew into a terrible passion, rolling on the ground and cursing the traitors who had dared to reduce him to slavery. The mercenary troops, whom he was obliged, according to Magna Charta, to disband, encouraged him in his anger and his plans for revenge; John called fresh reinforcements to his aid. After the treaties had been violated war broke out; the barons prepared for it; a tournament, which had been announced, was decided to be held nearer to London, and several gatherings had already taken place when the thunderbolt which John had invoked fell upon the heads of the English nobility. The Pope declared Magna Charta to be void, holding that it was

illegitimate, having been obtained by force, and he commanded Langton to dissolve any confederation under pain of being excommunicated. The archbishop set out for Rome, in order to obtain a revocation of this sentence, and the war commenced in England with the siege of Rochester. The place was defended by D'Albiney, a member of the council of the twenty-five; after a resistance, which lasted during two months, the garrison, having come to the end of their resources, at length opened the gates. John desired to hang the brave defenders of the town; the chief of his free bands, Sauvery of Mauléon, surnamed the Bloody, opposed his determination. "The war is only beginning, Sire," said he, "if you commence by hanging your barons, your barons will end by hanging us." The knights' lives were spared, and the men-at-arms only were executed.

Langton had failed in his mission at Rome, and had been deposed from his see; the barons were excommunicated, and the city of London placed under an interdict, but the confederates took no notice of the two sentences. "The Pope had been misguided," they said, "and had meddled in the temporal affairs of England, which do not concern him, as the spiritual domain alone belongs to St. Peter and his successors."

John however had become possessed of two large armies of mercenary troops of Brabantines and of free-lances, who willingly executed the sanguinary orders of their chief; one corps was sent to pursue their work of ravaging the counties of the East and the Centre, the other marched towards the North under the command of the king, repulsed into Scotland the young King Alexander, who had crossed the frontier to lend his aid to the barons, and burnt down and desolated the buildings in York, Northumberland, and Cumberland. Everywhere the barons, in retiring, would lay waste their houses and fields; everywhere the king burnt down whatever he found standing; but he was still advancing, while the confederates were retreating. They at length found themselves shut up in the city of London; all their castles had fallen into the hands of the tyrant, who had made a present of them to his followers, to Satan's guards, as the people

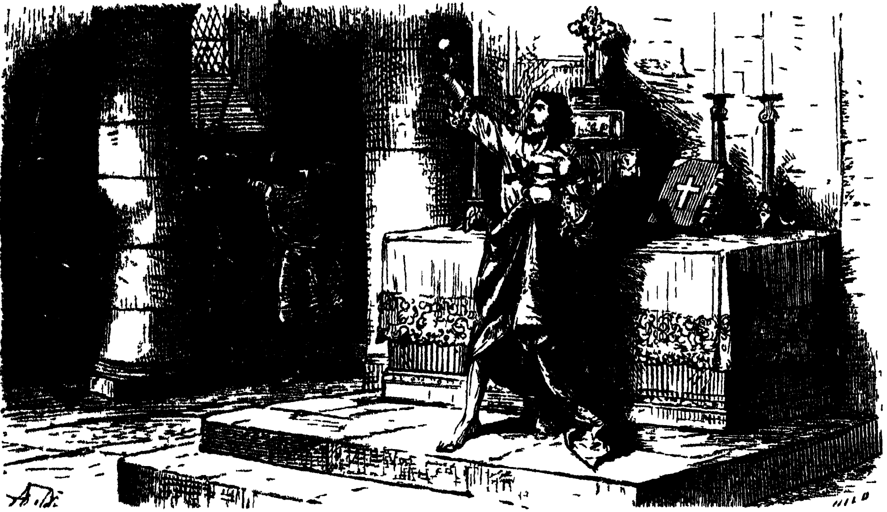
called them. The families of the confederates were at the mercy of King John; the barons resolved upon their course of action, a bitter one, that of seeking aid abroad, and accordingly sent a deputation to Philip-Augustus, proposing to give the crown of England to his son Prince Louis, if he would come to their help with an army. His arrival, it was thought, would immediately thin the ranks of King John's supporters, for they were mostly Frenchmen, and would be unwilling to fight against their own countrymen.

Philip-Augustus only wanted a pretext to meddle in the affairs of England. He agreed to the proposal of the barons, not, however, without requiring hostages as a guarantee of good faith; and in spite of threats from the Pope, who forbade either the father or the son to invade a fief of the Holy Church, Prince Louis set sail in the month of July with a large army, raised chiefly through the personal efforts of his wife, Blanche of Castile, a niece of King John, in whose name Louis put forth his claim to the crown of England. John's fears did not wait for the landing of the French troops; he had left Dover, and had repaired to Bristol, where the legate awaited him. Prince Louis landed at Sandwich, and, almost without striking a blow, he marched to London, which city he entered on the 2nd of June, 1216. The entire population came to meet him, and, after having offered up a prayer to St. Paul, he received homage from the barons and citizens, promising to govern them according to their laws, to protect their rights, and to restore their property to them. The satisfaction was universal: the counties surrounding London submitted willingly to Prince Louis; the oppressed inhabitants of the North revolted. A large number of John's mercenary troops deserted him, to return to their homes or to rally round the standard of France; the nobility who had become reconciled to the king, in the presence of the reverses sustained by the national cause, abandoned him to join their old friends; and, lastly, Pope Innocent III. was just dead (16th July), and hence the powerful support of Rome was taken from him. John had only the fortresses defended by his partisans remaining to him.

Meanwhile, Prince Louis was stopped at Dover Castle, and the English barons at Windsor Castle. In vain did they attack the massive walls with a machine which came from France, and which was called the "Malvoisine." Hubert de Burgh held his ground firmly at Dover, and the siege of Windsor had been raised; the confederates had hoped to surprise the king at Cambridge; but John had eluded them, and had proceeded to Lincoln, of which city he took possession. The prospects of the confederation were not flourishing; the reinforcements, which had been sent from France, were checked by the English sailors who remained faithful to King John. Prince Louis displayed little activity, and treated his English allies in a haughty manner. He had already presented several estates to the noblemen who had accompanied him from France; one of them, the Viscount of Melun, was dead; and he had, it was said, confessed, when dying, that the intention of the French people, when their prince should be on the throne, was to treat the English like men who had shown themselves untrustworthy by reason of their treachery to their sovereign. Distrust and discord had entered into the allied camps; several barons opened negotiations with King John. The latter's position was ameliorating; he had just left Wisbeach, and desired to proceed to Cross-Keys, on the south of the Wash, when, on arriving at the ford, he beheld the rising tide suddenly engulf the long line of waggons which were carrying his luggage, his treasures, and his provisions. The troops had already crossed the river, and were in safety, but the king became furious at witnessing such an irreparable loss; he arrived, exhausted with rage, at the convent of the Cistercian monks at Swineshead. No event, however dreadful, troubled King John while at table; he ate some peaches and drank some new ale—so immoderately in fact, that he fell ill on the morrow, and, thinking that he was poisoned by the monks, he caused himself to be taken to Newark. Death, the only enemy that John could not escape from, awaited him there. He sent for a priest, nominated his son Henry as his successor, and dictated a letter to the new Pope, Honorius, to

recommend his children to the care of the Holy Church. The remembrance of his crimes did not seem to trouble him on his death-bed; perhaps he held himself absolved from all his sins by his allegiance to the Holy See. "I commit my soul to God and my body to St. Wulstan," he said. He then expired on the 18th of October, 1216. He was buried at Worcester, in the church of Saint Wulstan. Death had at length delivered England of the cowardly and faithless tyrant whom she had for a long while submitted to, then vanquished, and against whom the country was still struggling in defence of Magna Charta, which, after the lapse of more than six centuries, remains the basis of English liberties.





CHAPTER IX.

KING AND BARONS.—HENRY III. (1216—1272.)

KING JOHN was buried when his young son was crowned at Gloucester on the 28th of October, 1216, by the Pope's legate. He was ten years of age at the time, and his feeble hands confirmed without resistance the gift which his father had made to Rome of the kingdom of England. It was the vassal of the Church, who in the month of November, 1216, was confided to the care of the Earl of Pembroke, the most formidable of the barons who had remained faithful to King John, by reason of his orderly and prudent character, for he was as devoted to the liberties of his country as the barons who had mustered round the banner of Prince Louis. He was nominated "Protector" of the kingdom and of the king, and his first care was to make a revision of Magna Charta; he eliminated the temporary articles; confirmed a great number of clauses; others remained pending until the raising of a more numerous army; and the earl directed all his efforts against the French prince and his foreign adherents. The favours and good graces of the Protector drew to him all the

barons who were deserting the French prince, and they were becoming every day more numerous. Their enmity had died out at the death of King John; the child who had just been crowned was their legitimate sovereign, descended from the kings whom they had loved and served. Louis saw his army rapidly decreasing; thanks to the vigorous resistance of Hubert de Burgh, he had been unable to obtain possession of Dover Castle, which he had been besieging for some time. In vain had they endeavoured to seduce him from his duty, by urging that the king to whom he had sworn allegiance was dead. "The king has left children," he answered, and Louis raised the siege to return to London, which still remained true to him. An armistice soon allowed him to go to France to collect reinforcements; but, in his absence, the insolence of Enguerrand of Coucy, whom he had left at the head of affairs, was spreading discontent, and the forces of the national party sprang up so rapidly that the prince, attacked on the sea by the sailors of the Cinque Ports, found some difficulty in returning to England. An army corps under the command of the Count of Perche was defeated by the Protector in the very streets of Lincoln, and the anathemas of Rome began to pour down upon Prince Louis and his adherents, who were excommunicated in a mass.

Louis was shut up in London, surrounded by his enemies; he asked for help from France, but his father, Philip-Augustus, would not become concerned in a quarrel with the Pope, and did not dare to act openly in his son's favour. It was Louis's wife, Blanche of Castile, who succeeded in raising considerable forces, which she sent to him under the care of a chief of adventurers named Eustace the Monk, because he had escaped from his monastery. The French fleet met Hubert de Burgh on the *high seas. The struggle began. Eustace the Monk was* defeated, and was beheaded on the poop of his vessel. Hubert de Burgh returned triumphantly to Dover with his prizes.

This last check was the death-blow of Louis's cause in England. On the 11th of September, 1217, a treaty of peace was signed at Lambeth, granting easy conditions to the French prince, and

a full pardon to his English adherents. The Protector had no other desire than to put an end to the struggle and to see England delivered from the foreigners; in spite of its prolonged resistance the city of London even obtained a confirmation of its privileges. Louis set sail in the middle of September, and his more distinguished partisans were kindly received at King Henry's court; Magna Charta was again confirmed, not, however, without some modifications favourable to the royal prerogative; the clauses relating to the protection of the forests were included in a special charter called the "Forest Charter," which rendered less severe the Norman legislation as to hunting and the edicts which related to it. The wisdom and moderation of Pembroke prevailed in the councils; the Queen-mother, Isabel, had fled from England in the midst of the confusion, and her first husband, the Count of Marche, had just been solemnly remarried to her; the legate remained with the young prince, and was instructed by the Pope to look after the interests of the vassal of the Church as well as those of the Suzerain mistress of England. Order seemed to have been re-established, when the Protector died (May, 1219), and the power, which was afterwards divided between Hubert de Burgh and Pierre des Roches, bishop of Winchester, became a bone of contention to the rivals and the barons attached to either party. Habits of insubordination, which had been developed during the long struggle against arbitrary power, had borne their fruit. England was rent asunder by internal quarrels which it was not even hoped would end on the king's attaining his majority, for Henry III. grew up without becoming a man. Absorbed in the love of luxury and pageantry, in the songs of minstrels and the masterpieces of the sculptors or of the artists with whom he loved to surround himself, he appeared to take no interest in his affairs, and displayed no warlike inclinations, but left the barons to quarrel among themselves and the Italian priests to devour the substance of his kingdom, without manifesting any desire to find a remedy. France was suffering from the evils of a minority. Louis VII., who had succeeded Philip-Augustus in 1223, had reigned but a short time, and

Louis IX. was not sixteen years of age when, in 1230, the King of England, who had come of age two years before, made a raid on Brittany at the instigation of some noblemen of Normandy, Brittany, and Poitou. But Blanche of Castile possessed a more vigorous spirit and a stronger arm than King Henry III.; she herself led her son to the war, and, in spite of the turbulency of the French barons, who were always eager to shake off their yoke, she saw her efforts crowned with success. Several towns belonging to the King of England opened their gates to her, while King Henry was losing time and wasting his resources on fêtes and tournaments at Nantes. He started back for England in the month of October, deeply humiliated, leaving his ally, the Duke of Brittany, at the foot of the throne of Louis IX., who granted him the pardon which he had humbly solicited with a rope round his neck. The Parliament (this Norman name was beginning to be used) which was convoked at Henry's return, refused to grant any subsidies, alleging that, thanks to the folly and imprudence of the king, his barons were no richer than himself.

Hubert de Burgh had for some years past triumphed over his rival, Pierre des Roches, who was obliged to retire into private life; but the ill success of the expedition to France had ended by causing a feeling against the minister among many of the nobility, who were jealous of his power. Pierre des Roches reappeared at the court, and soon afterwards formal accusations were made against Hubert, most of them frivolous, and attesting nothing but his fidelity to his king, whom he had served and defended during so many years. But Henry III. was not in a position to protect his friend, and would scarcely recognize him; he was prejudiced against Hubert, who took refuge at Merton Abbey. The king had ordered that he should be arrested there; but the Archbishop of Dublin reminded him of the privilege of sanctuary and obtained a passport, which authorized the fallen minister to retire to his residence and prepare his defence. On the faith of this promise Hubert de Burgh set out to meet his wife, the King of Scotland's sister, at Bury St. Edmund's; but he was attacked on the way by a band of armed men sent by the

king. Hubert was in bed at the time; he fled half-naked into the parish church, and, seizing in one hand the crucifix and in the other the host, he awaited his enemies upon the steps of the altar. He was dragged into the churchyard, and on the refusal of a blacksmith, who declared that he would rather die than chain down the defender of Dover Castle, was tied to a horse and conducted to the Tower of London. The violation of the consecrated spot, however, excited the public indignation to such a degree that the king found himself obliged to send his prisoner to Brentwood church, which he caused to be surrounded by palings and trenches, thus compelling Hubert to give himself up voluntarily. Having been again imprisoned in the Tower, the earl was deprived of all his property and afterwards languished for one year in the Castle of Devizes. He contrived to escape, and, having been rescued by his friends at the very moment when his enemies were upon him, he regained a certain amount of power; but he no longer aspired to the dangerous position of prime minister, which his rival, Pierre des Roches, had lost in consequence of his manœuvres and excesses. Being satisfied with the recovery of his liberty and a portion of his property, Hubert left the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Rich, in undisturbed possession of the supreme authority. This prelate, like his predecessor Stephen Langton, was a patriotic statesman, who contrived for the moment to conque , by his good sense and wisdom, the aversion which the king manifested towards charters, and the restlessness of the barons, who were always inclined to maintain by force of arms the privileges which they had gained with so much difficulty.

A fresh element of discord had sprung up between the king and his people. Henry had married in 1236 Eleanor of Provence, sister of Margaret, wife of Louis IX., King of France. A large number of Gascons and Provençals had followed her to the court; the queen was accompanied by four uncles, young brothers of her mother, the Princess of Savoy. The king immediately conceived a firm friendship for them; the Bishop of Valence became prime minister; his brother Boniface was promoted to the archbishopric of Canterbury, which Edmund Rich had abandoned, weary and

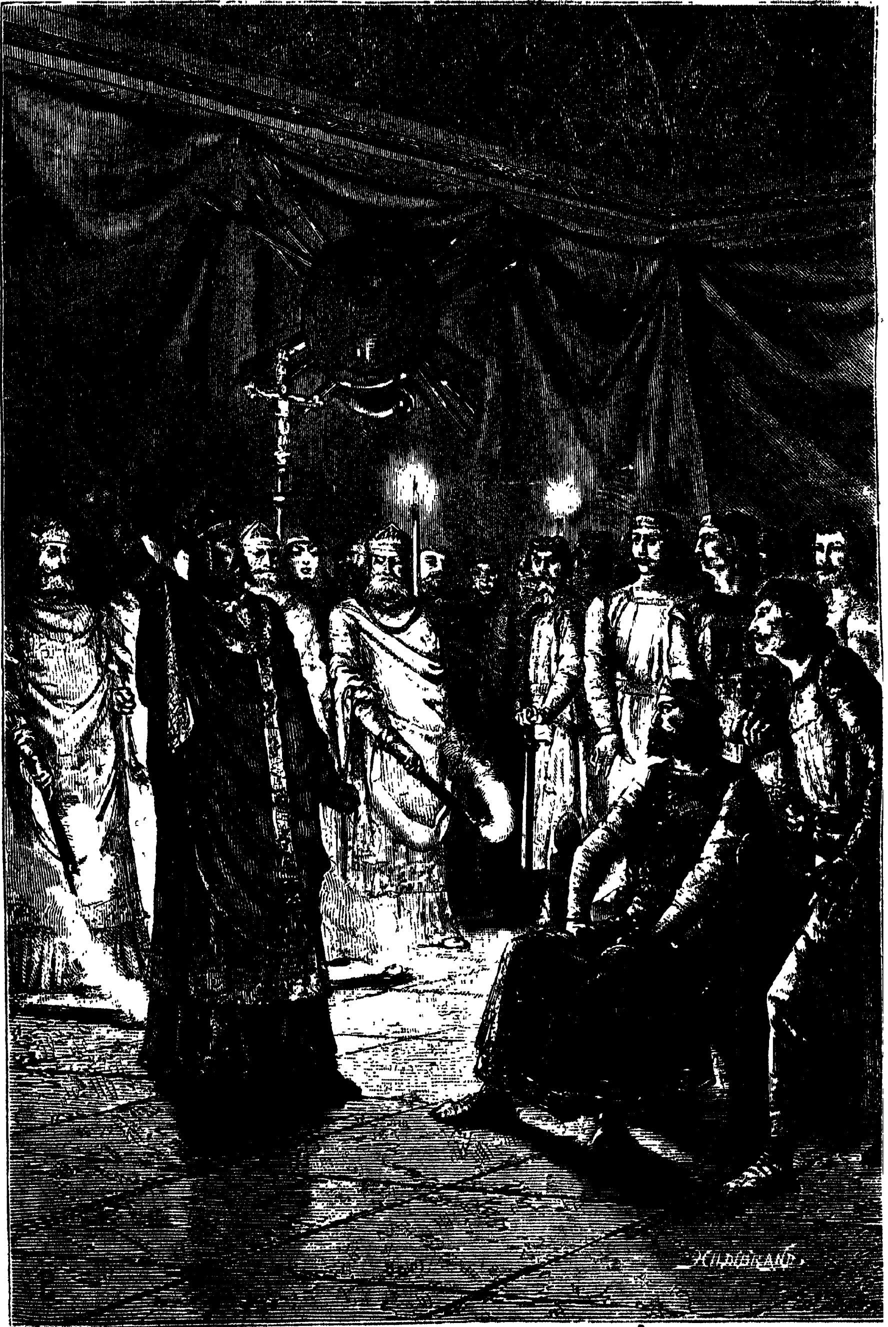
disgusted, to retire into a monastery; and the two other brothers were also provided for. Even this was not sufficient; the Queen-mother, now Countess of Marche, sent to the court of England the four sons whom she had borne to Hugh de Lusignan, and the wealth and honours which the king lavished on the brothers attracted towards them a large number of adventurers. The king found himself without money; all the ecclesiastical benefices were reserved for Italians, by virtue of the Pope's authority over the country. Parliament always insisted on the departure of the strangers as a condition of granting subsidies; but the king, immediately on obtaining the money, forgot his promises, and even his oaths, and his frivolous followers laughed at Magna Charta and the importance which the barons attached to it. "What are the English laws to us?" they would ask.

By these laws the king was compelled to ask his people for the means, which he wasted so foolishly on feasts and extravagance. Each day the Parliament became more reluctant to grant them. The Queen-mother, offended, she said, by the Countess of Poitou, sister-in-law of Louis IX., urged her son to declare war with France, assuring him that the old vassals of his house were eager to gather round his standard The English barons refused the necessary subsidies, saying that the truce agreed to between the two kingdoms still remained in force. Henry was not of a warlike disposition; but his mother was importunate; he raised some money, and set sail for France with three hundred knights. A certain number of malcontents soon joined him, commanded by the Count of Marche, whom his wife sent to the war, as she had already sent her son. King Louis IX. had taken the field with forces superior to those of the English. The two young monarchs met near the castle of Taillebourg, in Saintonge, on the banks of the Charente. Louis, at the head of his forces, attacked the bridge defended by the English troops, and for a moment withstood almost unaided their united efforts. His signal courage gained the day; the bridge was taken, the English were routed, and the King of England escaped in company with his brother, to whom he owed

his safety. The two brothers took refuge in Saintes. A second battle was fought on the morrow, under the walls of the town, and the English were again defeated. The Count of Marche surrendered, and King Henry, flying across Saintonge, embarked at Blaye, leaving the decorations of his chapel and the money remaining in his coffers in the hands of the enemy. It was to the moderation of King Louis IX. and to the scruples of his sensitive conscience that the English were indebted for a truce of five years.

The barons, humiliated and disgraced, although they had not been engaged in the quarrel with France, claimed the right of nominating the chief justicier, the chancellor, and several other officers of the crown. The king refused, and the Parliament only allowed him what was strictly necessary on the occasion of the marriage of his eldest daughter to the King of Scotland. Henry had conceived a hatred of parliaments. In order to manage without them he had recourse to every expedient by which he could raise money; he exacted enormous fines, tortured the Jews, and begged presents of all his vassals. "God gave us this child, but the king sold him to us," said a wag at the birth of one of the princes. Henry even, on one occasion, sold a portion of the royal table-plate. He was advised to sell everything, but the difficulty was to find buyers. "The citizens of London will buy anything," cried the king bitterly. "By my faith! if the treasures of Augustus were for sale, the citizens would make the purchase. These villains live like barons, while we are in want of the principal necessaries of life." The king detested the city of London, but he levied as many taxes as possible upon its inhabitants, instructing the persons of his household to obtain all the things necessary for his entertainments without paying for them, and continually claiming gifts under the most frivolous pretexts from the citizens.

In 1253, King Henry had come to an end of all his resources and expedients. He was compelled to convoke a Parliament, declaring that he was anxious to assume the cross, and to go and deliver the tomb of Jesus Christ from the hands of the infidels.



AS HE FINISHED SPEAKING, ALL THE PRELATES THREW ASIDE THEIR TAPERS.

The barons had often seen this pious pretext made use of, and were not to be deceived by it; they were, besides, accustomed in private life, to hear the same determination announced, in order to set aside the most solemn obligations. Before making any grant, they exacted a new and solemn ratification of their liberties. On the 3rd of May the king proceeded to Westminster Hall; the barons were assembled there, and all the bishops were standing with tapers in their hands. They offered one to the king. "I am not a priest," he said, and refused it. The Archbishop of Canterbury stepped forward, and uttered the sentence of excommunication against all those who should either directly or indirectly violate the charters of the kingdom. As he finished speaking, all the prelates threw aside their tapers, which were extinguished at their feet, and the priests cried: "May the soul of him who may incur this sentence be extinguished in a like manner in hell." The king, uplifting his hand, uttered this oath: "May God help me to preserve intact all these charters, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king, anointed and crowned." Scarcely had he received the subsidies, when he started on an expedition to Guienne, which was threatened by the intrigues of Alphonse, king of Castile. The quarrel was soon settled, and a marriage decided upon between Prince Edward, Henry's elder brother, and Princess Eleanor, daughter of Alphonse. But the king kept this happy consummation secret, in order to obtain fresh subsidies from his English subjects, under the pretence of continuing the war. He only came back to England when he found himself, as usual, reduced to beggary.

The king's want of political foresight was as conspicuous as his prodigality and weakness. The King of Sicily, Frederick II., had been dead some time (1250). He had been excommunicated, and Pope Innocent IV. had claimed his kingdom as a fief of the Holy See. Frederick's son, Prince Conrad, supported generally by the people, was resisting this pretension by force of arms, and the Pope was casting about for a foreign prince who might be disposed to take up the quarrel. He offered the crown of Sicily to

Richard, brother of the King of England, whose immense fortune, derived from the Cornish mines, rendered him more powerful even than King Henry himself; but he refused the tempting bait, although he was quite ready to be seduced, some months later, by the hope of gaining possession of the empire. The Pope then offered the kingdom of Sicily to the King of England for his second son, Edmund, and the monarch joyfully accepted the offer, without troubling himself about the demands of his subjects or the state of his finances. The Pope was borrowing of the Lombards and the Venetians, and raising troops in his name; but the Holy See was a hard and urgent creditor. Innocent IV. soon demanded back the money which he had spent, and ordered the English clergy to lend the necessary funds to the king. The clergy refused; the king levied enormous taxes on the abbeys and churches. The legate sent to England to recover the money encountered on all sides the most violent opposition. "I would rather die than pay so much money," said the Bishop of Worcester. "The king and the Pope are stronger than we," said the Bishop of London; "but if I am deprived of my mitre, I shall be able to wear a helmet." The legate returned, convinced that a storm was about to burst over England.

It was on the 2nd of May, 1258; famine reigned throughout the kingdom. Henry III. had been reduced to the necessity of convoking Parliament. When he entered Westminster Hall, the barons were awaiting him there, clad in their armour. On hearing the clanking of arms at his arrival, the king suddenly turned pale. "Am I a prisoner?" he said nervously. "No," said Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk; "but your foreign favourites and your own extravagance have reduced the country to such an abject state of misery, that we demand that the power may for the future be vested in a committee of bishops and barons, in order that they may root out all the abuses, and make good laws for us." One of the Lusignans began to protest. The king agreed, without any reservation, to the demands of the barons, who promised, in return, to help him to pay his debts,

and to support the pretensions of his son in Italy, provided that he would give proofs of his sincerity at the reassembling of Parliament, which was to be convoked at Oxford.

At the head of the barons, in their resistance and indignation against foreigners, was Simon, earl of Leicester, himself a foreigner. The youngest son of Simon of Montfort, the persecutor of the Albigenses, he had inherited the earldom of Leicester through his mother, and had recovered his property, which had been confiscated in 1232, through the favour of King Henry, who had taken a fancy to the young Provençal, whom he had aided in marrying his sister Eleanor, widow of the Earl of Pembroke, to the great indignation of the royal family and the nobility of England.

The favour of the king was short-lived. Montfort had initiated himself into the good graces of the barons, who had been so violently opposed to him at first; and the king, jealous and uneasy, drove him from England in 1239, scarcely allowing the earl time enough to embark with his wife, who went with her husband to France. He left her, to assume the cross and proceed to Palestine, where he distinguished himself by glorious feats of arms. On his return, the king had forgotten his jealousy and anger. The earl lived peaceably in England, and was even raised to the dignity of Governor of Gascony. He was recalled in 1252, under the pretence of misbehaviour, and young Prince Edward was provided with the office thus snatched from the Earl of Leicester, who grew more and more attached to the cause of the refractory barons, of whom he became the real chief.

The king's disorderly habits and want of foresight had at length reduced him to the last extremities, when he decided on confronting the Parliament assembled at Oxford on the 11th of June, 1258. The whole town was filled with men-at-arms; all the barons had brought a numerous following with them. They presented to the king the list of the council who were to be entrusted with the administration of the kingdom. Twelve members were to be elected by the king, and twelve by

the barons. This assembly, presided over by the Earl of Leicester, was to be invested during twelve years, with the care of the royal castles. No expense could be incurred against their will; they held possession of the great seal, and were to revise the accounts of the chancellor and of the treasurer; the king was to be compelled to convoke Parliament three times a year.

Henry agreed without hesitation to these humiliating conditions, just as his father, King John, had signed Magna Charta. Prince Edward, whose conscience would not allow him to take oaths as lightly as his father had done, at first made a show of resistance, but ended by acceding to the wishes of the barons. His cousin Henry, son of Richard of Cornwall, who was then known as the King of the Romans, declared that his oath would not be valid, if made in the absence of his father. "Let your father have a care," said Leicester, "if he refuse to do the bidding of the barons of England, for, in that case, he shall not remain in possession of one foot of land in the kingdom." The young nobleman accordingly took the oath.

The king's brothers had refused to give up the castles which they occupied. "I will have them, or you shall lose your head," Montfort declared to William of Valence. And he made such formidable accusations against them at the council, that the four brothers took refuge in Wolesham Castle. The barons pursued them, made them prisoners, and sent them out of the kingdom. The acts of the Parliament of Oxford, of the "Mad Parliament," as the royalists called it, were strictly observed throughout the kingdom.

The barons had taken every precaution against a feeble or improvident government; but they had not been able to guard against the temptations of triumphant ambition. The offices left vacant after the departure of the king's favourites, were filled up by the favourites of the Earl of Leicester. His allies began to grow alarmed at his great power; the King of the Romans, who had recently returned to England, after having taken the oath of allegiance to the acts of the barons, endeavoured to create rivals to the Earl of Leicester. The barons, violent

and haughty, insulted the king and oppressed the people. "Why are you so bold with me, my lord earl?" said Henry to Roger Bigod; "do you not know that I could order all your corn to be destroyed?" "Indeed, sir king," said the earl, "and could I not send you the heads of the destroyers?"

The dissensions among the barons reawakened the hopes of the king. He had provided himself with a dispensation from the Pope, which relieved him of his oaths, and, in February, 1261, he ventured to announce to the barons that they had greatly abused their power, and that he, the King of England, intended for the future to govern without them. He had at the same time taken possession of London. Prince Edward, who had recently returned from France, had, on the contrary, tendered his support to the barons, out of respect for his oath, as he said. The king saw a certain number of his adversaries drawing nearer to him, and in spite of the rebellion of the nobility, the temporary success of the king compelled Leicester to escape to France, swearing that he would never again trust to the oath of a perjured sovereign.

In 1263, the struggle had just begun afresh. The Great Earl, as Leicester was called, had raised his standard; the king had taken refuge in London, and Prince Edward was at Windsor Castle. Queen Eleanor, who was even more detested in the city than the king her husband, had endeavoured to escape by way of the Thames; the people had recognized her, and her bark had been pelted with mud and stones. Cries were heard of, "Let us drown the witch!" The Lord Mayor of London had had some difficulty in protecting her. The king had given up everything and agreed to everything, but only to attack his adversaries again in the month of June, arming himself against them with the Earl of Leicester's claim that the authority of the barons in the government was to be continued after Henry's death, under the reign of his successor. Prince Edward's scruples disappeared before this arrogant audacity, and he openly embraced his father's cause.

The bishops made an effort to put an end to the civil war;

they proposed to submit the dispute to the arbitration of Louis IX., a noble testimony to the fairness and integrity of a prince, who was related to the King of England by family ties. The barons consented at first; but King Louis, although requiring that Henry should respect the Great Charter, decided that the power should be placed in the king's hands, that the sovereign was free to choose his attendants from among his subjects, or from among foreigners, and that the royal castles should be given up. The barons smiled disdainfully at this decision; they had had some experience of the king's good faith, and expected to lose all the liberties acquired after so long a struggle, if they did not hold the tokens of them with a firm hand. The civil war recommenced; after alternate successes and reverses the two armies met on the plains of Lewes in Sussex. Prince Edward violently attacked a body of citizens of London who had followed Leicester to the field of battle. He was anxious to avenge the insult which his mother had suffered. He pursued the unfortunate soldiery, whose lines were soon broken by the king's cavalry. But, in his absence, fortune declared itself in favour of the Earl of Leicester; when Edward reappeared upon the field of battle, the king was a prisoner, as well as his brother, the King of the Romans; the prince soon suffered the same fate; the Lusignans fled and again made their escape from England. Leicester was now master of the situation; the sovereign and the heir-apparent served him as hostages. His power soon became greater than that of the king had been at any time. Having been excommunicated by the Pope, he took no notice of the sentence, notwithstanding his sincere piety. Rome had abused its power, and a great number of the English clergy were favourable to Leicester and supported his cause as that of the people, who adored the earl. Strong in his popularity, Leicester thought himself able to triumph over all his rivals. He compelled the barons who had sided with the king to give up their castles to him, causing them to be tried by their peers, and then banishing them to Ireland. On a demonstration being made by a fleet which had been raised in France by Queen

Eleanor, he gathered together soldiers from all the boroughs and cities to resist the invaders, while he himself, taking up his position at the head of the English squadron, was cruising in the Channel, awaiting the enemy. The Queen's vessels did not dare to leave port, and Leicester returned in triumph to England.

At the beginning of the year 1265, the earl had convened a Parliament, and, for the first time, the representatives of the counties and the towns had taken their seats beside the barons and prelates. Leicester knew where his real strength lay, and looked for support from the body of the people. All that was decreed by the Parliament as thus constituted, was favourable to the Earl: a certain amount of liberty was, however, granted to Prince Edward, who was, nevertheless, closely watched. He soon learnt to profit by the amelioration in his condition. Issuing forth one day from Hereford Castle, he organized races among his guards, reserving to himself the right of awarding the prize; then, when all the horses were exhausted with the exception of his own, he gallopped off until he met Roger Mortimer, one of his friends who was coming from the frontiers of Wales, to join him. The party of resistance to the barons thenceforth had a chief, and after a year of supreme power, Leicester was destined to discover the uncertainty of human affairs.

The earl had five sons; the three eldest were more violent, more tyrannical and more greedy than all the foreigners who had formerly surrounded the king. Henry of Montfort had seized upon all the wool intended for exportation, and sold it for his own benefit. Guy and Simon of Montfort had armed a fleet, and were taking possession of any merchantmen that they chanced to come across, without distinction of parties. They added thus daily to the number of their enemies, and were quietly undermining the power of their father. The Earl of Derby and the young Earl of Gloucester (formerly sincerely devoted to Leicester) embraced the cause of Prince Edward, who, seeing his forces swell rapidly, advanced towards Kenilworth Castle,

the hereditary property of the Earls of Leicester. Simon of Montfort, the earl's second son, had just arrived there; he was marching to meet his father, who was endeavouring, with little success, to raise an army; in vain did he summon the king's vassals to come and serve under his standards; his supporters were not many. Prince Edward attacked Simon's camp, just outside Kenilworth, made a large number of prisoners, and captured all the enemy's baggage. Simon had only time to take refuge in the castle, and he had been unable to join his father, when the latter arrived at Evesham, on the 14th of August, 1265.

A number of banners were perceptible in the distance, and the earl's barber declared that he recognized the arms of Simon. "Go up into the church-steeple, and you will see better," said Leicester. The barber was trembling with fear when he came down; he had seen the lions of England, the red chevron of the Earl of Gloucester, the azure bars of the Mortimers, and innumerable lances glistened underneath the banners.

"We are dead men, my lord," said he. The earl was observing the order of battle of the enemy. "They have learnt from me how to conduct themselves," he said calmly; "may the Lord have mercy on our souls, for, by the arm of St. James, our bodies belong to the prince;" and, re-entering his residence he prepared, as usual, for the fight by prayer and the sacrament. His son Henry was encouraging him. "I do not despair, my son," said the earl; "your presumption and the pride of your brothers have brought us to this; but I will die for the cause of the Lord and justice."

He had caused the feeble king to be armed, and had taken him about with him everywhere. The standard of England was displayed by both armies. The earl was endeavouring to open up a road towards Kenilworth; his most devoted adherents had formed a circle round him; the prince still pushed forward; in front of him, a horseman had just fallen from off his steed. "Save me," cried a plaintive voice; "I am Henry of Winchester!" Edward sprang forward, and, raising up his wounded father, dragged him into a place of safety. In his absence, the voice of

the earl resounded upon the field of battle. "Is any quarter given?" he asked. "No quarter for traitors!" cried a royalist triumphantly, and at the same moment, Henry of Montfort fell at his father's feet. "By the arm of St. James, it is time to die!" cried Leicester, who plunged headlong into the surging crowd, holding his sword with both hands, and striking down all who came in his way. He fell at length, as well as the knights who still surrounded him; scarcely a dozen remained standing, when Prince Edward sent for the body of the earl, his godfather, and that of his cousin Henry, to transport them to the abbey of Evesham; the body of Leicester was decapitated, and his hands were severed from his arms; his head was carried to Lady Mortimer by her husband's savage warriors.

Thus died "Simon the Just," as he was called by the people of England; a sincere man, animated by more noble sentiments than most of his contemporaries; haughty and ambitious without being cruel; a man who had rendered great services to his country before allowing himself to abuse his power by the very thirst for authority and popularity. The remembrance of him remained sacred among the people, who would assemble round his tomb and invoke his protection devoutly, complaining of his not having been canonized. His sons took refuge on the Continent, after having retained possession for some time of Kenilworth Castle. The younger ones remained with their mother, who was generously treated by her nephew Edward; the two eldest, Guy and Simon, accomplished their revenge by murdering, five years later, at Viterbo, their cousin Henry of Almagne, in a church, while mass was being celebrated. They disappeared after this crime—the House of Montfort had fallen for ever.

The king had regained his sceptre, delivered the prisoners, and called back the exiles who had been banished by the Great Earl; but the victory gained by Leicester survived his defeat. In the Parliament convened at Winchester, in the month of September, 1265, the king did not dare to repudiate the liberties acquired by England. The City of London alone lost its

charter, but the severe sentences pronounced against Leicester's partisans excited a series of insurrections which Prince Edward had great difficulty in quelling. The want was felt of loosing the reins of government, and of restoring some trust to the vanquished; a committee composed of bishops and barons was entrusted to draw up the conditions of peace; their sentence, known under the title of the Dictum of Kenilworth, was confirmed by the king and the parliament. The efforts of the



Pope, the uprightness and good senso of Prince Edward, and the weariness of all parties, at length brought about a general cessation of hostilities. On the 18th of November, 1267, more than two years after the battle of Evesham, the Parliament, which had assembled at Marlborough, adopted several of the liberal guarantees formerly proposed by the Earl of Leicester; the last of the "patriots," as they called themselves, who still held the Isle of Ely, laid down their arms; the citizens of London received a fresh charter, and the country was at peace.

Scarcely had peace been secured, when Prince Edward took

advantage of it to assume the cross, as did also his wife Eleanor of Castile, and his cousin Henry of Almagne. They made sail in the month of July, 1270; Louis IX. had just set out on his second crusade, and Prince Edward, a great admirer of his uncle of France, was hastening to join him, when Henry of Almagne, who had been sent upon a secret mission to Italy, was assassinated by his cousins, the Montforts. This blow was fatal to the old King of the Romans, who died in the month of December, 1271; eleven months afterwards, on the 16th of November, 1272, his brother, King Henry III., also died. He was interred in Westminster Abbey; but before being lowered into the grave, the Earl of Gloucester, placing his naked hand upon the corpse, took an oath of fidelity to King Edward I.; the other barons followed his example. King Henry was sixty-five years of age, and had reigned fifty-six. King only in name, feeble and frivolous, he had seen the liberties of his people grow greater under his eyes and against his wish; his son, who was still vainly contending against them, was destined to derive from the free support and energetic ardour of the English nation, the strength which served him through his wars and conquests.



CHAPTER X.

MALLEUS SCOTORUM—EDWARD I. (1272—1307.) EDWARD II. (1307—1327)

THE English fleet was speeding towards the coast of Tunis, to which place the policy of Charles of Anjou had taken Louis IX. Prince Edward was already rejoicing at the idea of going back to his uncle, to gain instruction in Christian chivalry. But with the land appearing in the horizon, when approaching the port, the French vessels were seen in mourning, the flag being only halfway up the mast. A feeling of uneasiness spread through the fleet. A little bark put out from shore; she came alongside the prince's vessel. "The holy king is dead," said the sailors, and they burst into tears. Prince Edward was in despair; he landed, and appeared to his imagination to be walking among ghosts. The French soldiers, discouraged, sick, and disheartened, resolved to give up an enterprise the commencement of which had been so disastrous. The young King of France, Philip the Bold, urged Prince Edward to return like himself to his country; but Edward was inflexible. "I would go," said he, "even had I only with me Torvac, my equerry." As far as Trapani, in Sicily,

he accompanied the funeral procession of King Philip, bearing the coffins of his father and brother. When he reached France the unfortunate young monarch had added to these the biers of his wife, his sister, and his brother-in-law, the King of Navarre.

Prince Edward left Sicily in the spring of 1271, making sail towards Acre, the only place which still remained in the hands of the Christians. He commanded a small band of troops, and the European knights who were in Palestine did not respond very readily to his appeal. An attack on Nazareth, which was followed by the massacre of the Mussulman garrison, and the repair of the walls round Acre; such was the result of the Seventh Crusade, when Edward himself nearly fell a victim. He was in his camp, on the Friday after Whit-Sunday, towards the time of vespers; overcome by the heat, he was resting upon a couch, when a messenger from the Emir of Jaffa presented himself at the door of the tent. He was in frequent communication with the prince, and was, therefore, allowed to enter. The Arab presented his papers; then, suddenly drawing a dagger from his long sleeve, he stabbed the Prince in the region of the heart. Edward sprang up from his couch, and, knocking down the assassin, fractured his skull with a stool. Then, repressing with a sign the violence of his attendants, who had appeared on hearing the commotion, and who were mutilating the assassin's body,—"Of what use is it," he asked, "to strike a dead man?"

The prince's wound was slight, but the idea of poison presented itself to everybody's mind. The Spanish legend relates that Eleanor of Castile kneeled down before her husband, and, applying her lips to the wound, sucked the poison from the wound. This noble instance of conjugal love is disbelieved, however, by some historians. An English surgeon was called, who commenced a cruel operation. Eleanor was very pale, and her brother-in-law dragged her out of the tent. She struggled with him weeping all the while. "It is better that you should cry," he said abruptly, "than that all England should be in mourning." Edward's wound was soon healed. As soon

as his wife had recovered, after the birth of a little girl, called Joan of Acre, in token of her birthplace, the English troops set sail again, promising themselves, as King Richard had done, to come back to the Holy Land with larger forces. But the ardour for the crusades had died out. Saint Louis and Prince Edward of England were the last crusaders, and, eighteen years later, in 1291, the last remains of Christian power in the East disappeared in its turn. Acre was retaken from the Templars by the Sultan Keladeen. The Holy Sepulchre thenceforth remained in the hands of the infidels.

Prince Edward passed through Italy and paid a visit at Rome to Pope Gregory X., formerly Archdeacon of Liége, a friend of the prince, and while with him received tidings of the death of the king his father. The grief which this loss caused him was so violent that Charles of Anjou was astonished; a throne would readily have consoled him for the death of the weak Henry of Winchester. "You lost two children," he remarked, "without displaying as much grief." "The Lord, who gave me my children, can give me others," rejoined Edward; "but who could give me back a father?"

The new king was in no hurry to return to his kingdom. He stayed in Italy to obtain justice for the murder of Henry of Almagne; but Simon of Montfort was already dead, and Guy was subjected only to a term of imprisonment, but contrived to elude his gaolers. From thence Edward proceeded to France, to do homage for Guienne to King Philip the Bold; he at the same time visited his possessions, being apprehensive, no doubt, that some plot might be on foot to deprive him of them. On his return he was challenged to single combat in a tournament by the Count of Châlons. Edward was warned by the Pope that that nobleman sought his life, he was by nature distrustful. When he saw at Châlons a larger number of knights than he possessed himself, his suspicions were aroused, and the tournament became a battle. The English gained the victory; the Count of Châlons himself was for a moment in danger; Edward compelled him to save his life by surrendering to a mere man-at-arms.

On the 2nd of August, 1274, the King of England at length landed at Dover, and on the 19th of the same month he was crowned at Westminster, to the great delight of the people. The nation was proud of its young king, of his reputation for courage and virtue, of his exploits and perils in the Holy Land. His reign commenced under happy auspices. The Jews alone disliked the accession of a prince so renowned for his austere piety and for his zeal against the infidels. Their instinct had not deceived them; Edward was always violently hostile to them, and one of the first acts of his government, on his return from the crusade, was to hang all the Jews who were in possession of sweated coin. More than two hundred of them perished in London alone for this offence, common among both the Jews and the Christians. It was but the beginning of their grievances. Persecuted, plundered, imprisoned, the unlucky Israelites were finally banished from the country in 1290, and all the property which they were obliged to leave behind them was confiscated.

While the king was hanging the Jews, he was also instituting a commission instructed to inquire into the state of landed property in the kingdom, in order to put to a test the title-deeds of the Christians. When proofs were wanting the king exacted a fine before granting fresh letters patent; but this useful device was not always practicable. When Earl Warren was called upon to produce his documents he drew his sword. "That is the title by which I hold my lands," he said, "and that which will suffice me to defend them. Our fathers who came over with William the Bastard acquired the land with their good lances; he did not conquer the country unassisted; he was supported by others, and his supporters shared the spoil with him." The earl's title-deeds were deemed sufficient.

The prosperity of England was great at this time; several years of rest had allowed its commerce to develope itself. The king respected the charters in all important particulars; his zealous judicial administration had diminished the number of robbers who infested the highways, and secured the integrity of

the magistrates; he was popular among his subjects. But this peaceful glory did not suffice for Edward I. As ambitious as his ancestors, he had a desire to make conquests in other quarters. Instead of looking with an envious eye on the Continent, he had conceived the project of subjecting the whole of Great Britain to his dominion. Scotland was far off, and he could find no pretext for declaring war in that direction. Wales had never recognized anything but a partial authority of the kings of England, and the reigning prince, Llewellyn. had neglected to do homage to Edward I. on his accession to the throne. It was in this direction then that the king turned his attention. He advanced towards the frontiers of Wales towards the end of the year 1276. All attempts at negotiation failed, and Llewellyn was declared a rebel in that part of the year when the snow was beginning to cover the mountains. The war could not possibly begin for several months.

Edward, however, did not lose time. David, the younger brother of Llewellyn, had been deprived by the latter of all his property; the King of England conferred many favours upon him, and the prince, out of gratitude, summoned all his partisans under the standard of England. Hostilities began in the summer; Edward entered the enemy's territory, while his fleet took possession of the Isle of Anglesey, and, driving Llewellyn from castle to castle, from retreat to retreat, he reduced him in a short time to famine in the depths of the forests. The Welsh prince was obliged to surrender, hard as were the conditions which were imposed upon him. But Edward was generous, although severe; he remitted his demands one by one, and ended by consenting to the marriage of Llewellyn with Eleanor of Montfort, daughter of the Earl of Leicester; she had for some time been affianced to him, and had been captured at sea in the preceding year, when she was proceeding to Wales. David had received a large gift of property. Edward withdrew his armies, leaving in Wales only some soldiers in the castles, and the Chief Justice, Roger Clifford, who was entrusted with the government of the new conquest.



"THAT IS THE TITLE BY WHICH I HOLD MY LANDS"

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The King of England had not taken into account the patriotic spirit which endeared their national independence to the Welsh people. In vain had he raised David to the rank of earl; in vain had he given him an English wife; as soon as the Welsh prince found himself in his mountains again, he remembered only that his country was formerly free and that he had contributed towards reducing it to subjection. The civil and military measures ordained by Edward were obnoxious to the people; the highways which were opened up across forests, the executions of criminals for crimes which had formerly been punished by fines, according to the Welsh laws; the encroachments of the king's officers upon the rights of the Welsh nobility; so many grievances easily furnished pretexts for David's new resolve. He persuaded his brother to break all his engagements with Edward. An old prophecy of Merlin began to circulate again throughout the mountains; it was to the effect that the Prince of Wales would be crowned in London when the money in that town should be round, and it was rumoured in Wales that it was forbidden to cut in halves the new coin which had recently been struck in England, as had hitherto been the practice. The day of victory seemed at length to have arrived.

It was on Palm Sunday, 1282; dark night had come on, and a violent storm was raging in the forests. David suddenly attacked Hawarden Castle, where the chief justicier resided. The latter was seized in his bed, wounded, and dragged into the mountains. All the country rose; Llewellyn joined his brother and laid siege to the castles of Flint and Rhuddlam; the English settlers were everywhere murdered. All Wales was up in arms when tidings of the insurrection reached the king.

Edward pretended not to believe in the magnitude of the rebellion; but he adopted active measures to repress it. He soon arrived in the mountains; the autumn had come, the bad weather was beginning, and the English suffered greatly from the inclemency of the climate. A portion of the army who tried to make use of the temporary bridge uniting the Isle of Anglesey to the mainland were attacked by the insurgents and completely destroyed.

Edward himself was several times obliged to retreat. Llewellyn, emboldened by his success, entrusted David to defend the defiles of the mountains, and marched to meet the king, who had gathered large forces near Carmarthen. A detachment encountered the Welsh prince in a farm where he had slept, and, without knowing him, an English knight engaged in a combat with him. Llewellyn was killed; the struggle was then carried on between the English and the Welsh who had come to join their prince. When the dead were despoiled after the battle, Llewellyn was recognized, and his head was sent to Edward in token of victory. David still held his position in the mountains; at length he was betrayed, delivered up to the English, and imprisoned in Durham Castle with his wife and children. In the month of September, 1283, the English Parliament condemned him to death as guilty of high treason, while Edward promised a new prince to the country which he had just subdued. Queen Eleanor was at Carnarvon Castle, waiting to be delivered of a child; she gave birth to a son on the 25th of April, 1284. The child was immediately called Edward Prince of Wales; and when he found himself heir presumptive to the throne, by the death of his elder brother Alphonsus, his title became the appanage of the eldest son of the King of England, thus perpetuating the remembrance of the definitive subjection of the Welsh people and the feeble consolation which the conqueror had offered to them.

A few years of peace followed the conquest of Wales. The king had been recalled on the Continent to serve as an arbitrator on the claims of the houses of France, of Arragon, and of Anjou to the crown of Sicily. His English subjects were clamouring for his return, and they ended by refusing him the necessary subsidies. The king then returned to England; but a great misfortune awaited him, Queen Eleanor died on the 29th of November, 1292. With her disappeared the softening influence which had modified the haughty character and ambitious views of the king; and just at this moment a great temptation offered itself to him.

The King of Scotland, Alexander III., had died in 1286, leaving no other heir than his granddaughter Margaret, princess of Norway. She was still a child, and her father had kept her for some time past with him. She at length sailed for Scotland in 1290; but she died during the passage, and Scotland became a prey to all the evils of a contested succession. Thirteen noblemen, descendants of members of the royal family, set up claims to the throne simultaneously; but two of them had prospects very much better than those of any of the others: these were John Baliol and Robert Bruce, grandson and son of two elder daughters of David, earl of Huntingdon, the younger brother of King William the Lion; but no one possessed claims sufficiently strong to impress the people in their favour. The Scotch, troubled by the prospect of an anarchy without result, sent an embassy to King Edward to ask him to act as arbitrator in this serious aspect of affairs, and to decide who should be King of Scotland.

Edward received the deputation at Norham on the 10th of May, 1291, and from the first he declared that, as liege lord of Scotland, he would settle the question of the succession, insisting, first of all, upon the recognition of his rights of superiority by the pretenders. The Scotch people hesitated; they asked for a delay. "By St. Edward, from whom I hold my crown," cried the King of England, "I will establish my just rights, or perish in the attempt." And the assembly was adjourned until the 2nd of June following. Edward had convoked all the barons.

On the appointed day, eight claimants had met near Norham, in the plain of Hollywell-Haugh, on the Scotch territory. When the Chancellor of England asked the pretenders, among whom was Robert Bruce, whether they were willing to abide by the decision of Edward, king of England, as liege lord of Scotland, Bruce recognized without hesitation the rights of the powerful monarch who could award the crown to him. His rivals did likewise, and John Baliol, who arrived on the morrow, was the more willing to compromise the safety of his country as he

believed he had secured the favour of Edward. The chancellor had taken care to announce, in the name of his master, that the right of the king as liege lord, which had just been recognized, in no way affected the titles to property which he might think proper to proclaim valid thereafter. On the 3rd of June, a commission was appointed to examine the rights of the two great pretenders, and the regents of Scotland consigned all the royal castles to Edward, on condition that he should give them up two months after the decision between Bruce and Baliol. On the 15th of the same month, the pretenders took the oath of allegiance to Edward, as did also a great number of Scotch barons, and peace was proclaimed in his name, as liege lord of Scotland. The first step in the path of dependence had been made.

The second act of the drama was enacted at Berwick Castle, on the 17th of November, 1292. There King Edward, having made a scrutiny of the rights of all the pretenders, and having consulted the Parliament of Scotland, at length declared that the grandson of the elder daughter had a prior claim to that of the son of the younger daughter, thus deciding in favour of Baliol to the exclusion of Bruce. On the 19th the governors of the castles received instructions to give up their keys to the new king, and on the morrow Baliol swore fidelity to Edward at Norham. Having been crowned on the 30th at Scone, he proceeded to England, whither King Edward had been called back in consequence of the illness and death of Eleanor of Castile; the new king did homage for the kingdom of Scotland on the 26th of November, at Newcastle. The King of England again reserved his rights of property.

While Edward was labouring to subject the Scotch people, King Philip the Fair was secretly plotting with the intention of driving the English from the French soil and depriving them of Aquitaine. An encounter had taken place between the English and Norman sailors on the coast of Guienne; the merchantmen of the two countries taking sides warmly had been engaged in several fights with each other. The King of France seized the opportunity, on some outrages having been committed on his

subjects, to summon King Edward to appear at his court, as Duke of Aquitaine, in order to answer before his peers for the offences committed against his liege lord. Edward sent his brother Edmund, who weakly consented to satisfy the feudal honour of King Philip by placing in the hands of the French officers the duchy of Gascony for a period of forty days. The conditions were agreed to. The question was not one of territorial aggrandisement but of reparation. The English prince waited for forty days. This period of time having elapsed, he came to claim the restoration of his domains; the King of France laughed, and declared that the Duke of Aquitaine had forfeited his rights as a vassal by not presenting himself personally before his liege lord. The grand constable was at once sent to all the towns and castles belonging to King Edward; a large number of them opened their gates to him; the duchy of Aquitaine was returning, it was said, to the crown. Edward I. had commenced his preparations for reclaiming his provinces by force of arms.

The English ships were about to weigh anchor, when a violent insurrection broke out in Wales. The king despatched a little body of troops into Gascony, sent his fleet to hover round the coasts and seize upon all the French ships which might come in their way, and despatched the greater portion of his forces to Wales. In spite of the winter, the snow, the mountains, the impenetrable forests, and the obstinacy of the insurgents, Edward pursued his enemies in all directions, and contrived to subdue them. Madoc, the ringleader, laid down his arms; the most intractable chiefs were sentenced to be imprisoned for life, and the king, triumphant, left Wales to embark for France. The Scotch did not allow him time, however, to accomplish his intention.

Since Edward had placed the feeble Baliol upon the throne of Scotland, he had spared him no humiliation. Every time that a petitioner, dissatisfied with the justice of the King of Scotland, thought proper to appeal to the liege lord, Edward would summon Baliol to appear at his court to render an account of his judgment, and this summons was repeated four times during the first year of

the reign. At length, in 1293, in the matter of a complaint of the Earl of Fife, Baliol, who was tired of these proceedings, declared that the question concerned his subjects, and that he could not reply to the appeal without consulting his people. "What!" cried Edward; "you are my vassal, you have done homage to me, and it is to answer to me for your acts that you are here." Baliol persisted; the English Parliament condemned his conduct, and King Edward only consented to retard by some months the pronouncing of the sentence. In the interval, the difficulty about Guienne occurred, and King Edward, occupied with his struggles against his own liege lord, soon learnt that his vassal, the King of Scotland, led on by the national movement in his country, had contracted with King Philip an alliance cemented by a promise of marriage between his young son Edward and Jane of Valois, niece of the King of France. A short time before, the Parliament of Scotland had decided on sending back all the Englishmen employed at the court and formed a council consisting of four earls, four bishops, and four barons, who were entrusted with the management of the affairs of the kingdom. Baliol was held by his subjects in a kind of captivity.

The suspicions which King Edward had conceived, and which had kept him in England, while he sent his brother into Guienne, were soon justified. The Scotch invaded the county of Cumberland with a large army; they were easily repulsed. Edward soon advanced towards the frontier, marching first of all against Berwick. He attacked the town by land and by sea, and all resistance was useless. The king, mounted upon his horse Bayard, was the first to spring across the dyke which protected the town. A fearful massacre took place; neither age nor sex excited any pity. It was on the 30th of March, 1296; on the 5th of April, the abbot of Arbroath presented himself at the English camp; he brought Baliol's renunciation of all homage towards the King of England. Edward had a short time before addressed a similar communication to Philip, king of France; but this coincidence did not appease his anger. "Ah! then the scoundrel has dared to defy me!" he cried; "if he will not

come to us, we will go to him." And he marched forward, taking possession on his way of the castles which resisted him. Dunbar, Roxburgh, Dunbarton, Jedburgh, Edinburgh, Stirling, had already fallen into Edward's hands, when a fresh message from Baliol was brought to him. He humbly begged for peace. The king did not do his revolted vassal the honour of treating him as a sovereign and of negotiating personally with him; he ordered Baliol to proceed to the castle of Brechin, to which place he despatched the Bishop of Durham. A few days later, on the 7th of June, 1296, Baliol, deprived of all his regal insignia, with a white rod in his hand, presented himself at the cemetery of Strathkathro, in the county of Angus, acknowledging that he had violated all his obligations towards his liege lord, who had very justly invaded his fief; after this act of self-abasement and renunciation, tired, he said, of the malice and ingratitude of men, he was sent to the Tower in honourable captivity, and subsequently ended his life in his domains of Normandy, forgotten or despised by all.

Robert Bruce at once claimed the crown. "Do you think that I have nothing else to do but to conquer kingdoms for you?" King Edward harshly replied; and he marched towards the north, receiving everywhere the homage of the Scotch nobility. He had convened a Parliament at Berwick; he proceeded there on the 28th of August, in order to arrange the government of his new acquisition. He displayed on this occasion great prudence and moderation; he returned to the Church all property which had been confiscated from it, and left the inferior offices in the hands of the functionaries who occupied them; but the guardianship of the castles was confided to the English. Warren, earl of Surrey, was nominated governor; Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer; and William Ormesby, chief justicier. Scotland was treated as a conquered country. King Edward now thought himself at leisure to devote his attention to his affairs in France and to prepare to cross the Channel.

The allies of England upon the Continent were in urgent need of his help. The Earl of Bar, the son-in-law of Edward, had

been defeated and made a prisoner in an attempt against Champagne, and his wife, being unable to regain her liberty, had died of grief. Guy, count of Flanders, had been attracted to Paris under false pretences, together with his wife and his daughter Philippa, who was affianced to Prince Edward of England; all three had been thrown into prison, and, although the count succeeded in buying back his freedom, he had been compelled to leave his daughter in the hands of Philip the Fair, who denied the right of vassals to give their daughters in marriage without the authority of their lord.

King Edward would have had great difficulty in helping his foreign allies, for he was engaged in a struggle against his English subjects. The conquest of the countries of Wales and Scotland had required great efforts, and the nation had borne its heavy burdens without murmuring. In 1295, however, at a request from the king, who required a half of their revenues, the clergy appealed to Pope Boniface VIII., who issued a bull in their favour. But the ecclesiastical thunders had began to lose their terrors; Edward had seized upon the property of the clergy, and the bishops had ended by giving in. The merchants and citizens were more obstinate than the priests, and when the king, in 1297, conceived the idea of imposing an enormous tax upon every bale of wool, making at the same time large requisitions of grain, the complaints became loud. From remonstrance, the people had arrived at overt resistance, when the king seized at all the ports the wool and skins intended for exportation, and sold them for his own benefit. The merchants met together, protested against this "evil toll," as they called it, and declared that the Magna Charta ordered that the English people were not to be taxed without their own consent. A certain number of powerful noblemen supported the citizens in their movement.

King Edward had raised two armies; one was to march to Guienne, and the other to Flanders, to help the Count Guy, who was anxious to avenge his injuries on King Philip. Edmund, King Edward's brother, had died in Guienne; the

king himself reckoned upon commanding the expedition in Flanders. He summoned to Salisbury Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford and constable of England, and Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, field-marshal, to entrust to them the command of the army of Guienne; both replied that their offices compelled them to remain near the king's person during the war, and that they would not proceed to Guienne without him. "By the Lord God Almighty, my lord earl!" cried Edward, addressing himself to Bigod, "you shall go, or you shall be hanged." "By the Lord God Almighty, Sire king," replied the proud baron calmly, "I shall not go, neither shall I be hanged." And both retired to their estates, immediately followed by thirty bannerets and by fifteen hundred knights, who everywhere created an opposition to the levying of the taxes.

The king was in an awkward position. He convoked in London a popular assembly, having taken care first of all to become reconciled with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Winchelsea, who had been the prime mover in the resistance of the clergy, and had found himself deprived of all his revenues in consequence; then, accompanied by the prelate, the Earl of Warwick, and Prince Edward, the king appealed directly to the people, assuring them that nothing was more disagreeable to him than to impose heavy burdens upon his well-beloved subjects; but that he had been compelled to do so in order to defend them against the Scotch, the Welsh, and the French. "I am now going to expose myself for you to the risks of war," said he; "if I return alive, I will repay you for everything; if I should die, there is my son: place him upon the throne, and his gratitude will reward your fidelity." The king was weeping, and all those who were present were profoundly touched. Prince Edward was declared regent amid public acclamation; the Archbishop of Canterbury was nominated as his adviser, and the king marched towards the coast. He had only arrived at Winchester, when he was stopped, on the 12th of August, by a remonstrance from the prelates, the earls, the barons, and the commoners of England, declaring that they were not obliged to accompany him

into Flanders, their ancestors not having served the kings of England in that country; and they added that, even were they so disposed, the poverty to which they had been reduced did not allow them to do so. "The king," they said, "had already violated on several occasions the charters which he had solemnly ratified; his 'evil toll' was intolerable, and his absence was about to leave the country a prey to the invasions of the Scotch and the Welsh." The king made an evasive reply to this declaration; reckoning upon the affection of the common people, he made sail with the troops who remained with him, and disembarked at Sluys towards the end of August.

Scarcely had Edward left the coasts of England when Bigod and Bohun entered London, on the 24th of August, at the head of considerable forces. The strictest discipline prevailed in the ranks of their followers. They went straight to the treasury, and deposited their complaints against the arbitrary exactions and the violations of Magna Charta committed by the king; then, proceeding to Guildhall, they exhorted the citizens of London to maintain their rights. The young regent, being alarmed, convoked a Parliament, which abolished the impost upon wool, and decreed that no tax whatever could in future be raised without the consent of the bishops, peers, citizens, and freemen of the kingdom, and that the king could not seize upon any goods without the authority of the owners. Orders were sent out to read the Magna Charta in all the churches once a year, under pain of excommunication against those who should endeavour to prevent it. This sentence was to be proclaimed every Sunday in all the churches.

The act, signed in London, was sent to Ghent, where King Edward was at the time. They demanded that it should be ratified. The barons undertook to join the king in Flanders, or to march against Scotland, where the people had again risen, according to his pleasure. During three days, the pride of King Edward resisted; at length, he signed the document, promising himself to make all his concessions void afterwards. As soon as they were secure in their victory, the barons set out for Scotland.

Edward needed the support and good will of his English subjects, for he had gained but little success in Flanders. After having with difficulty quelled the violent rivalries which had occurred in his fleet between the sailors of the different ports, he had found a great number of Flemish towns occupied by the French, supported by a party powerful in the country itself. The Count Guy had again fallen into the hands of the King of France; the Flemish and English would often engage in struggles against each other, after having fought together against the French; Edward's foreign allies, the Emperor, the Duke of Austria, and the Duke of Brabant, sent no help, and thought to have done their share in receiving the subsidies of England. King Edward listened to the overtures of Pope Boniface VIII., who was endeavouring to re-establish peace. He left Guy of Flanders in prison, where the latter afterwards died, as well as his daughter. He affianced his son Edward to Isabel of France, thus laying the foundation of the misfortune of his lifetime, and himself married Princess Margaret, who was then seventeen years of age, contenting himself with recovering Aquitaine, while Guienne still remained in the hands of Philip the Fair. Peace being thus concluded, Edward started on his return to his kingdom, where the position of affairs imperatively required his presence.

The great Scotch noblemen had taken the oath of allegiance to the King of England, but the less powerful ones had not had the honour of accomplishing that act of submission. Sir Malcolm Wallace, of Ellerslie, had not taken the oath, nor had his second son, William Wallace, who was already outlawed for the murder of an English soldier in consequence of a dispute. He had lived since then in the mountains; but, having one day appeared at the market in Lanark, the young man was insulted by an Englishman, whom he killed. He found a friendly shelter, and contrived to escape; but the house which had protected him was burnt, and the mistress of it lost her life. Wallace swore to wreak a terrible revenge upon the English.

Soon, all the adventurers, outlaws, and bold spirits, weary of subjection, rallied round Wallace. At the moment when King

Edward started for Flanders, the Scottish leader had already become a dangerous partisan, attacking the English when he met them in small numbers, and plundering the country under their authority. His forces were increasing in number; many noblemen had joined him, and were raising their standards in favour of John, king of Scotland. A certain number of powerful noblemen followed them. Robert Bruce himself, grandson of him who had contested the crown against Baliol, had come over to the national party. "The Pope will absolve me from all the oaths which I have involuntarily sworn in favour of King Edward," said the future deliverer of Scotland. The Earl of Surrey was raising forces in the southern part of the kingdom.

When the two armies came in sight near the town of Irvine, in the county of Ayr, they were about equal in numbers; but the English troops were well drilled and obedient to a single general; Wallace's army was disorderly, divided, led by rival chiefs, and little disposed to admit the superiority of an outlaw of low origin. No encounter took place. On the 9th of July, the great Scotch noblemen laid down their arms and tendered their submission to King Edward. One baron alone, Sir Andrew Moray of Bothwell, remained faithful to the national party; but Wallace took with him a large number of vassals of the noblemen who had surrendered, and his raids upon the territory occupied by the English became bolder and bolder every day.

Stirling was seriously threatened by the insurgents, when the Earls of Surrey and Cressingham advanced with large forces. The two parties occupied the opposite banks of the Forth; Wallace's position was excellent, and he was offered terms. "Tell your masters," he replied to the envoy, "that we are not here to parley, but to assert our rights and to deliver Scotland. Let them advance, we are ready." The English hesitated. Surrey deemed the attack dangerous, but Cressingham, like a true financier, was complaining loudly of the ravages made upon the king's treasury by an army which did not fight, and the general yielded; at daybreak, on the 11th of September, 1297, the English army began marching across the bridge. It was narrow, and the soldiers

passed over it slowly. When one portion of the army had crossed, Wallace caused the bridge to be occupied by a detachment, and he attacked the English, who had not yet had time to form into a battle corps. The slaughter was fearful. Among the dead bodies was found Cressingham, who was odious to the Scotch by reason of the severity of his administration. His savage enemies flayed him, in order to preserve his skin in remembrance of their revenge. Surrey retreated with the remainder of his forces. But Wallace's success had delivered Scotland for the time being; the castles were surrendering in every direction; the popular champion entered Northumberland and pillaged the English territory, while famine kept him away from Scotland. When he reappeared in his country, laden with plunder, an assembly of noblemen awarded to him the title of governor of the kingdom and commander-in-chief of King John's forces. Baliol, still imprisoned in England, smiled bitterly at this use of his name.

Meanwhile, King Edward had recrossed the sea, and his orders for the levying of a large army had preceded him. In the eyes of the conqueror of Scotland the insurrection led by Wallace was a rebellion, not a patriotic movement. Scarcely had he set foot in England than he marched towards the North. Having halted for a while at York, where he was to have convened a Parliament, the barons who had formerly placed themselves at the head of the popular resistance came and met him to demand the ratification of the concessions granted at Ghent. "By and by," cried Edward; "I have no leisure time just now; I must first of all reduce the Scotch rebels to obedience." And he swore before three bishops that he would occupy himself with the liberties of his English subjects when he should have riveted the chains of his Scottish subjects. Bigod and Bohun were satisfied with this promise, and followed him into Scotland.

The king's vessels were delayed. He was detained between Edinburgh and Linlithgow, when an insurrection broke out in his camp; the Welsh troops threatened to leave him and to go over to the Scotch. "I care little," said Edward, "if my enemies

join my enemies; I will punish them all in one day." The provisions began to run short, and a retreat was spoken of, when the Bishop of Durham was warned, on the 10th of July, 1298, that the Scotch army was encamped in the forest of Falkirk, and was preparing to attack the English troops. "Glory be to God," cried Edward. "He has delivered me up to the present from all dangers. They need not follow me, for I will go to them." And, raising his camp, he marched against the Scotch troops. It is related that, during the night before the battle, being asleep by the side of his horse, the king had two ribs broken by a kick from the animal. The circumstance created a profound sensation throughout the army; it was said that the king was dying through some treachery. Edward donned his armour, mounted his horse, and continued the march. The Scotch army was at length in sight. In front of them was a marsh, and the archers and pikemen were protected by a palisade. When Wallace saw the lances of the enemy glistening in the sun he called out to his men, "I have led you to the dance, now hop if you can." The Scottish infantry valiantly withstood the shock of the two army corps led by Bigod, Bohun, and the bellicose Bishop of Durham, but the cavalry were terrified on seeing the superior forces of the English, and fled in confusion. The pikemen and archers began to give way; the palisades were trampled down, and the victory was complete. The field of the battle of Falkirk was strewn with the corpses of the Scottish soldiers, when Wallace contrived to fall back upon Stirling with the remainder of his army; the English followed him there; but they found the town burnt down. Wallace had disappeared. King Edward was desolating the country by fire and sword; the inhabitants of the towns were flying at his approach; St. Andrew's was deserted when the king set fire to it. The citizens of Perth burnt their own town. Provisions were now scarce; Edward was obliged to retreat towards the end of September, 1298, leaving all the north of Scotland in the hands of the patriots, who had just constituted a council of the regency, at the head of which was John Comyn. Scarcely had the king crossed the frontier when his enemies threatened Stirling Castle.

Other troubles awaited Edward in England; he had convoked the Parliament at Westminster for the month of March, 1291; the barons claimed the fulfilment of his promises, and the ratification of the new liberties added by them to the Magna Charta. The king still delayed, denying the validity of a confirmation made in a foreign country; he experienced, he said, displeasure at finding himself thus pressed to grant a favour against his inclination. The barons, however, insisted; the king left London, almost secretly, and went into the country under pretence of being indisposed; the barons followed him there, renewing their demands. At length the king, wearied of this, sent to the Parliament the required ratification; but, with a puerile want of good faith, he added to the concessions so hardly won this little sentence: "Saving the rights of the crown." The barons, indignant, left London in their turn, but to prepare for resistance. The king still reckoned upon the devotion of the people of the City; he ordered the sheriffs to cause the charter to be read at the cross of St. Paul's; an immense crowd was assembled, hailing with applause each of the clauses which guaranteed the rights of the people; but when the reader came to the phrase, "Saving the rights of the crown," his voice was drowned by whistling, shouting, and loud menaces. Edward was too shrewd and sagacious to resist the will of the people when expressed in such an unmistakable manner; he convened a fresh Parliament, solemnly ratified all the concessions, without mentioning the rights of the crown, and nominated a commission of three bishops, three earls, and three barons entrusted with the completion of the limitation of the royal forests, which had hitherto been extended at times into private property. The charters of the forests were ratified in the year 1300. Bohun had just died; but Bigod was still alive, and the victory was definitively assured to the barons, in spite of the efforts which the king was still making to deliver himself from a yoke which was insupportable to his haughty character and his ambitious projects.

The marriage of King Edward with Margaret of France had taken place, as had also his son's betrothal to Isabel (September

1299), and two little incursions into Scotland had produced no other result than an intervention on the part of Pope Boniface VIII. in favour of the Scotch, by virtue of the rights which he claimed over that kingdom. Although haughtily refusing to recognize this strange pretension, the King of England had three times granted a truce to the insurgents. The third had just expired, when the treaty of Montreuil, made between England and France on the 30th of May, 1303, gave up Guienne to Edward, who abandoned his Flemish allies as Philip the Fair did his Scottish allies. Freed from care on the score of continental affairs, Edward, on the day following the ratification of the treaty, marched into Scotland; he was already at Edinburgh on the 4th of June, and his progress across the northern counties resembled a triumphal march; all the fortresses opened their gates; Buchan Castle alone remained closed. While the English were attacking the ramparts with their weapons, Sir Thomas Maule, the governor, was marching up and down on the ramparts, with a handkerchief in his hand, wiping off the dust raised by the battering-rams. On the twentieth day of the siege he was struck with an arrow, and, when dying, he stigmatized the soldiers as cowards, who were asking permission of him to surrender. Scarcely had the valiant champion breathed his last when his castle was given up to the English forces. The king established himself in winter quarters in the abbey of Dunfermline, and it was there that the Scotch barons came to negotiate for peace; each one had drawn up his own conditions; Wallace had disappeared since the battle of Falkirk; the noblemen had supplanted him in the government of the country, which he had delivered without their aid. The king caused a proclamation to be made that the outlaw was to surrender at discretion; Wallace, however, took no notice, but remained in the mountains. The Castle of Stirling now alone offered any resistance, in spite of the injunctions of the Scottish Parliament assembled by Edward; when Sir William Oliphant, who commanded it, was compelled to surrender on the 26th of July, 1304.

A last blow was about to strike the patriotic party in Scot-

land. Wallace, betrayed by his friend Monteith, was delivered into the hands of the English in the month of August, 1305. King Edward had not the generosity to pardon the proud patriot who had so long resisted him. Wallace had broken no oath, he had never sworn allegiance to King Edward, and he had fought for the independence of his country, but he was nevertheless condemned to suffer a traitor's death. He was executed at Smithfield on the 23rd of August, and the portions of his dismembered body were sent to different towns in Scotland, where the people were more inclined to treat them as sacred relics than to consider them as emblems of disgrace. Wallace had kindled a fire which was not destined to die out, and it was in vain that Edward had thought to stifle it by severe punishment.

Scarcely had the government of Scotland been constituted by a commission of prelates and Scottish barons, pursuing their labours in London in conjunction with the English members of Parliament, when a fresh insurrection broke out in Scotland; a new chief presented himself for the cause of independence, one who was destined to achieve the task begun by Wallace; it was Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick.

For a long time Bruce had vacillated between the two parties; having been engaged during his youth in the service of Edward by his father, he had sworn allegiance, then violated his oath, and had finally determined to observe his old professions. At length, after the fall of Baliol, he had proposed to Comyn, surnamed the Red, a powerful Scottish lord, and one of his neighbours, that whichever of the two should establish his claim to the crown should bequeath the kingdom to the other as an indemnity. Comyn had pretended to accept the bargain, but he had secretly warned Edward of the conspiracy. Bruce, who was in England, was about to be arrested, in spite of his kinship to the royal family (he had married Joan of Valence, Edward's cousin), when Gilbert de Clare sent a pair of spurs to him by a messenger. Bruce took the hint and immediately mounted his horse; he did not know what danger threatened him, or who had betrayed him, and he was careful to conceal his traces, when

he met a servant of Comyn, who was carrying fresh communications to Edward. Having seized the missives and assured himself of Comyn's treachery, Bruce hastened back to Scotland. A few days later, on the 10th of February, 1306, these two enemies met at Dumfries, and Bruce called Comyn into a chapel of the Minorites, in order to demand an explanation of his conduct. They were alone; the dispute became furious; Bruce drew his dagger and struck Comyn, who fell upon the steps of the high altar. Pale and agitated, Bruce left the chapel hurriedly; his haggard appearance struck his friends who were in attendance upon him. "What have you done?" Fitz-Patrick of Closeburn asked him. "I think I have killed Comyn." "You think?" cried Fitz-Patrick, "then I will make sure of it." And, re-entering the holy place, he struck the wounded man another blow, killed the latter's uncle, Sir Robert Comyn, who tried to defend his nephew, and returned to Bruce. The little band hurried away at a gallop. Bruce had only one course before him now; he was henceforth an outlaw, and the boldest action became necessary; the fire was smouldering in all the noble hearts of Scotland. As soon as Bruce raised the standard of independence some priests and lords gathered round him and boldly crowned him at Scone. On the day of the Annunciation (1306) Scotland had a king; Edward I. heard of it at Winchester a few days later.

In the eyes of the King of England Bruce was a rebel, and was, moreover, a man who must be punished for having committed sacrilege; he sent a small army into Scotland under the command of the Earl of Pembroke, and, tired and sick as he was, began to make extensive preparations for marching personally against the insurgents. Prince Edward, his son, was twenty-two years of age, and had not yet been knighted. On the 23rd of May, during Whitsuntide, the young man, having received his spurs from the hands of his father, conferred the same distinction upon two hundred and seventy young lords, companions of his pleasures, who were about to become his comrades in arms. All the company then met at a magnificent banquet; a golden filet was brought upon a table, containing two swans,



BRUCE TOOK THE HINT AND IMMEDIATELY MOUNTED HIS HORSE

emblems of constancy and fidelity; then the king, placing his hands upon their head, swore to avenge the death of Comyn and to punish the rebels of Scotland, without sleeping for two nights in the same place, and to start immediately afterwards for Palestine in order to rescue the Holy Sepulchre. The young men swore the same oath as the king, and the latter made them promise, if he should die during the war in Scotland, not to bury his body until the conquest should have been achieved. The prince immediately afterwards started for the frontiers with his companions; the king followed less rapidly, as he could only travel upon a litter.

Meanwhile Bruce's forces had increased rapidly; the malcontents—and they were very numerous—were beginning to declare themselves and to rally round the new king. When the Earl of Pembroke arrived in Scotland the insurgents were in high spirits; but a battle was fought on the 19th of June, near the woods of Methven, which destroyed suddenly their illusions; many Scots were killed; the prisoners were put to death, and Bruce retired into the mountains of Athol with five hundred men. Too ill to proceed further, King Edward had been obliged to stop at Carlisle; but he was directing all the operations of his troops, and ordering the execution of the prisoners, thus bearing witness to his deep-rooted resentment against Scotland. Bruce was leading the life of a knight-errant in the forests, hunting and fishing, accompanied only by a few faithful friends; his wife, his two sisters, and the Countess of Buchan shared with him his adventurous existence, which the fine weather rendered tolerable, even in Scotland.

Meanwhile, winter was coming on, and it became necessary to enter into more civilized quarters. Bruce's little band was attacked by Lord de Lorn, a relation of Comyn's, and a mortal enemy of Bruce. The King of Scotland's companions were falling under the battle-axes of Lochaber; he sounded the retreat, and, clad in armour and mounted upon a good war-horse, he took up his position in the defile, and defended the approach single-handed; Lorn's mountaineers hesitated, being

terrified at the immovable countenance, the long sword always on guard, and the bright eyes glistening under the helmet; at length three men, a father and two sons, named Mac-Androsser, famous in their clan for their strength and courage, sprang forward together upon the royal champion; one seized the bridle of the horse, and his arm fell at his side, his hand being severed; another fastened himself to the leg of the horseman; the horse pranced about, and the unhappy warrior had his head split open by a sword-stroke; the father, who was more skilful, and who was besides maddened at the fate of his sons, was clutching the king's cloak; he was still holding to it after his death, and Bruce was compelled to leave in the hands of the corpse this token of so desperate a struggle. The king had retreated without being wounded, but it was necessary to place his wife and sisters in safety, and the castle of Keldrummie afforded them a shelter, while Bruce took refuge in the Hebrides. The separation was doomed to be a sad and long one, for the castle was taken, and Nigel Bruce, Robert's younger brother, was cruelly put to death; the Queen of Scotland was sent to England, and Bruce's sisters-in-law, shut up in wooden cages, were exposed to the public sight at Berwick and Roxburgh; every time that any of the adherents of Bruce fell into the hands of the English troops they were put to death; the king himself, who was now excommunicated and proscribed, had taken refuge in the little island of Rachrin; his retreat was unknown to his enemies, and a reward was offered in Scotland to whoever would give news of Robert Bruce, who was lost, stolen, or strayed.

It was in the spring of 1307, that Bruce suddenly reappeared, supported by some ships which had been lent to him by Christiana, Lady of the Isles. Deceived by a false indication, he attacked Henry Percy, to whom King Edward had recently given the castle of Carrick, Bruce's own property; and, taking his enemies by surprise, he defeated them, caused great slaughter, and returned in triumph into the castle, which he could not hold for any length of time, surrounded as he was on all sides, not only by the English forces, but by his personal enemies, and all the family of Comyn.

The capture of Carrick Castle was nevertheless Robert's first step upon the ladder of fortune; but yesterday a fugitive, he was rejoined by his scattered supporters: after his success, warriors who previously had been undecided, embraced the cause of Bruce, whose forces became so formidable, that Edward, who was furious at this success, resolved to leave Carlisle to march in person against the rebels; he caused his litter to be hung up in York cathedral in memory of his sickness, and was about to mount his horse when he heard that the Earl of Pembroke had been defeated on the 10th of May by Bruce at Loudon Hill; the rage of the king lent him strength for awhile; he started out for Carlisle at the head of a large corps; but the journey was cut short, Edward being obliged to stop; he was not more than three leagues from Carlisle when death came and chilled the proud heart and the indomitable spirit, once animated by the noblest and most chivalrous desires, but for several years absorbed in ambitious projects and cruel schemes of revenge. His last words were a recommendation to his son to finish the task which had been begun, to be good to his young brothers, and to maintain three hundred knights in the Holy Land. When he was buried at Westminster an inscription was placed upon his tomb, covered by a block of stone brought from Palestine:—

EDUARDUS PRIMUS.	MALLEUS SCOTORUM.	1307	PACTUM SERVA.
Edward I.	The Scourge of the Scots.	1307	Keep the covenant.

Among the sovereigns who had governed England, very few had held the power with a firmer hand than Edward I., very few, however, saw the foundation of more liberties. In vain, in 1307, when the king had thought the conquest of Scotland assured, had he hoped to effect his deliverance from the yoke which his people had imposed upon him; in vain had he obtained from the Pope a bull on the 4th of January, 1305, which relieved him of his oaths and annulled the charters which he had ratified, forbidding any one, under pain of excommunication, to claim their fulfilment; in vain, Bohun being dead, had Edward's threats succeeded in intimidating old Bigod and his

faithful ally, the Archbishop of Canterbury; the attitude taken up by the entire nation had caused the king to hesitate, and he had not yet made public the Papal bull, when the insurrection in Scotland absorbed all his attention and necessitated the assistance of Parliament. The liberties acquired by the barons now had a durable guarantee; the great lords were not obliged to resort incessantly to arms, Parliaments having been instituted. We have seen the deputies of the towns summoned to Parliament for the first time by the Earl of Leicester; under King Edward I. the barons began to hold their deliberations privately, and the knights from the shires and the deputies from the towns who were summoned less frequently, formed a second chamber. From this time dates the origin of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The most complete Parliament which had yet sat, was that of 1295, convened by King Edward before his campaign in Flanders: an Ecclesiastical Parliament had been convoked at the same time. The subsidies which were then granted, and which the king endeavoured to increase by acts of extortion, were the cause of the opposition of Bigod and Bohun; at the death of Edward, the charters had been so firmly established in England, that no monarch dreamt of disturbing them again, until the unhappy days of Charles I. The liberties of the nation were assured by the frequent meeting of the Parliaments, their faithful and natural guardians. The constitution of England was founded.

The burdensome inheritance left by the king who had just died fell into hands too feeble to support it. Edward II. was twenty-three years of age when he succeeded his father; the latter had had six sons, three only of whom survived him; the young king had already shown signs of frivolity and obstinacy which augured the misfortunes of his reign. Brought up from childhood with a young Aquitanian, Piers Gaveston, he had conceived for this companion so strong an affection, that the king, his father, had been alarmed thereat, and had on several occasions banished the young favourite. At the death of Edward I. Gaveston was in exile; but at the news of the

accession of his young master, he hastened to him, and the first act of the king was to confer upon him the Earldom of Cornwall, which had previously been deemed a position sufficiently conspicuous for the princes of the blood royal. Edward did not content himself with this; while he was pretending to carry on the campaign in Scotland, the great officers of the crown had been changed; the Lord Treasurer, the Bishop of Lichfield, was even deprived of his property and cast into prison. In spite of the oath which the old king had exacted from his son, the latter had returned to London to inter his father, leaving Bruce free to pursue his success. Gaveston, who had lately married Margaret, a niece of the king, was nominated regent of the kingdom in the month of January, 1308, by the king, who went over to France to marry the Princess Isabel, according to Froissart, one of the most beautiful women in the world.

King Philip the Fair had just caused the dissolution of the order of Templars in France, an iniquitous proceeding, inspired rather by the prince's greed than by the offences of the order. Philip thereby obtained for the King of England the dowry promised to the latter, and persuaded him, without great difficulty, to withhold his protection from the Templars established in England, who were prosecuted a short time afterwards. Edward made sail on the 7th of February to return to England; he was accompanied by a numerous suite of French noblemen, at the head of whom were two uncles of the Queen. Gaveston came to meet the king. As soon as Edward perceived him, forgetting his young wife and his noble followers, he threw himself into the arms of his favourite, embracing him and calling him his brother, to the great indignation of Isabel and all the beholders; their indignation was increased when they saw Gaveston decked out with all the jewels which the King of France had recently offered to Edward. The discontent arrived at its height, when, at the ceremony of the coronation, which took place with great splendour on the 14th of February, Piers Gaveston, as the people persisted in calling him, in spite of his elevation to the Earldom of Cornwall, was entrusted with the

task of carrying before the king the crown of St. Edward, to the exclusion of the highest noblemen of the kingdom, who were all anxious for this honour.

Isabel had already begun to complain to her father of her husband and of the favourite, when the barons came to the king four days after his coronation. "Sire," they said, "send back this stranger who has no business here." The king promised to give his reply on the assembling of Parliament after Easter: meanwhile, he endeavoured to lessen the resentment of the noblemen towards his friend. But Piers was most imprudent, frivolous, and vain; he loved to make a show of his talent for chivalrous exercises, and overthrew successively from their horses in several tournaments the Earls of Lancaster, Hereford, Pembroke, and Warren, whose wounded pride was added to the many serious causes of resentment against the favourite. On the assembling of Parliament, the annoyance of the barons was so great, that the king was constrained to give way and to banish Gaveston; he loaded him with presents on his departure, giving him all the jewels which he had received from Queen Isabel, and accompanied him as far as Bristol to bid farewell to him. Gaveston was believed to be in Aquitaine, when news came that the king had appointed him governor of Ireland, and that Gaveston had just established himself there with a degree of splendour almost regal.

The king longed to recall his favourite; he lavished favours upon the great lords in order to win them over, and, when he had been relieved by the Pope of the oath which he had sworn never to recall Gaveston to England, he sent for his friend, and went as far as Chester to meet him, publicly announcing that the Earl of Cornwall had been unjustly banished, and that justice demanded a fresh examination of his conduct. On the other hand, the barons declared that the king had violated his oath and would not scruple to break all those which he had sworn for the maintenance of the public liberties. The discontent was increasing; the queen complained of the desertion of her husband; the Countess of Cornwall was representing to her brother, the Earl of Gloucester, Gaveston's

unworthy conduct towards her; the king and his favourite did not heed the storm which was about to burst; feasts, dances, and tournaments succeeded each other without intermission at the court. The king's funds had meanwhile run low, when, in the month of August, 1311, he found himself compelled to convene Parliament at Westminster.

The barons came, discontented and resolute; the old Archbishop Winchelsea had exhorted them to deliver the kingdom from the power of the favourite; the Earl of Lincoln, when dying, had sent for his son-in-law, the Earl of Lancaster. "Do not abandon England to the king and the Pope," he had said; "do as the ancient barons did, and stand firmly by your privileges." Scarcely had the barons arrived at Westminster, when they renewed the stipulations of the "Mad Parliament" of Oxford; they demanded the formation of a temporal council entrusted with the task of providing for the government of the kingdom; one of the clauses in the new concessions forced from the king was that he should be compelled to convoke Parliament at least once a year.

The barons had brought with them their men-at-arms. Edward II. signed all that they demanded, and Gaveston was once more obliged to leave the country. The king had proceeded to the North, and was busy raising an army, when his favourite suddenly appeared at his side. Such daring was beyond endurance. The Earl of Lancaster, the king's cousin, came unexpectedly upon Edward; the king only had time to escape with Gaveston, leaving the queen in the hands of the barons, who treated her with great respect. The king and his friend had set out in a little bark; they landed at Scarborough, and Piers shut himself up in the fortress there, while the king proceeded to York in the hope of joining his army. But the barons had already set out for Scarborough; being besieged in the castle, Gaveston surrendered on the 17th of May, to the Earl of Pembroke and Lord Henry Percy, who promised to spare his life, and undertook to take him to his castle of Wallingford. The little band started on their journey; but when they arrived at

Dedington, the Earl of Pembroke had left his prisoner to go and see his wife, who was in the neighbourhood. On the morning of the 19th, Gaveston received orders to dress himself at once; he descended into the courtyard, and found that his guards had been changed; the Earl of Warwick, the "black dog of the Ardennes," as the favourite called him when jesting with the king, had arrived during the night; the prisoner was tied on the back of a mule and led to Warwick Castle. The Earl of Lancaster was there. Piers was accustomed to call this nobleman the "old boar," but he now threw himself at his feet begging for mercy; the judges were inflexible, he was hastily tried, and being condemned, the unlucky Piers was conducted to Blacklow Hill, between Warwick and Coventry, where a scaffold had been erected; the executioners hesitated for a moment to accomplish so horrible a deed. "You have caught the fox; if you let him go, you will have to give chase to him again," cried a voice from among the crowd, and the favourite's head fell; he was only thirty-three years of age.

While Edward II. was mourning his murdered friend, Robert Bruce was slowly conquering Scotland; twice had the King of England attempted an expedition in support of the power which was slipping from his hands, and twice he had returned without result; the authority of Bruce was being established everywhere in his country; the castles of Perth, Jedburgh, Dunbar, Edinburgh were in his hands; he was besieging the fortress of Stirling, when the governor, Sir Philip Mowbray, contrived to make his appeals for succour reach the king; Edward aroused himself for a moment from his natural indolence and raised a large army to march against Scotland; he started from Berwick on the 11th of June, 1313.

The forces of the King of England amounted, it is said, to nearly a hundred thousand men; while they were marching with their banners flying, the sun, which was glistening upon the armour and the lances, appeared to inundate the country with a flood of light; King Robert was concealed in the forests with an army of forty thousand men, nearly all on foot, awaiting the enemy,



"I HAVE SPOILT MY GOOD BATTLE-AXE."

VOL. I.

and preparing barriers which were intended to check the onslaught of the English troops, on the only spot open to attack. On the morning of the 23rd of June, 1313, the two armies met near Bannockburn.

The English had hastened their march, and had arrived in some disorder, in front of the Scottish army. Lord Clifford, who had attempted an ambuscade, was repulsed by Randolph, earl of Moray, nephew of King Robert and one of his best knights; the king himself, with a golden crown on his helmet, was marching slowly along the line of his troops; a relative of the Earl of Hereford's, Sir Henry Bohun, sprang forward against the "Scottish traitor," reckoning upon throwing him by the weight of his horse alone; Bruce was mounted upon one of the small horses of the country.

The king did not expect the shock; he turned, however, with great skill, and Bohun's lance passed close by his side without inflicting any injury upon him; raising himself up in his stirrups and displaying his gigantic figure, he struck the rash Englishman a terrible blow with his battle-axe; the helmet was shattered by his powerful arm, and Sir Henry Bohun, whose skull was fractured, was carried off by his horse dead. Bruce returned slowly to the spot where the greater part of his forces was concentrated: while his friends were surrounding him, reproaching him for running so great a risk, the Scottish hero was looking sorrowfully at his notched axe, and laughingly answered, "I have spoilt my good battle-axe."

The night had been passed in prayer in the Scottish camp, and in feasting and debauchery by the English. King Edward had not expected a battle, and held his forces assembled in such a manner as to render any manœuvres impossible. At daybreak, the young king was astonished at the good order observed in the Scottish ranks. "Do you think they will fight?" he asked of his marshal, Sir Ingeltram d'Umfreville. At the same moment, the Abbot Maurice d'Inchaffray appeared before the Scottish troops holding a crucifix in his hand; all bent their knees, all uncovered their heads. "They are asking for mercy," cried

Edward. Umfreville smiled bitterly. "Of God, not of us, Sire," said he; "these men will win the battle, or die at their posts." "So be it!" replied the king, as he gave the signal for the attack,

The struggle was furious from the commencement; the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford sprang towards the Scottish infantry, which remained firm; the long lances withstood the onslaught of the English knights. Randolph was still advancing with his best regiment. Keith was attacking, with five hundred mounted men-at-arms, the English archers, who could not fight at close quarters and were trampled under foot by the horses. Banners were torn and lances and swords were shattered to pieces; the feet of the combatants were slipping in the blood; the majority of the English began to hesitate. "They fly, they fly," cried the Scotch. At the same moment a loud noise was heard behind them upon the hill; the camp followers and the sick and wounded soldiers, excited by the ardour of the struggle, were descending in a mass towards the scene of action. The English imagined themselves attacked by a fresh army; a disorderly retreat had begun, when Robert Bruce, charging with his reserve decided the fate of the day beyond the possibility of a doubt. The Earl of Gloucester was killed while attacking Edward Bruce, Robert's brother. Clifford and twenty-seven other barons fell by the king's side; the Earl of Pembroke seized the bridle of Edward's horse and dragged him away from the battle-field. Sir Giles d'Argentine accompanied him out of the crowd, then retraced his steps, exclaiming, "It is not my custom to fly!" and he was killed by Bruce's soldiers.

Never had a victory been more complete: the fortress of Stirling surrendered immediately; the Earl of Hereford, who had shut himself up in Bothwell Castle, offered to capitulate, and was exchanged for the wife, the sister, and the daughter of the King of Scotland, who had been detained for several years in England. There still remained a great deal of territory to conquer, but the work of Edward the First was destroyed, and Scotland was no longer a dependency of England.

Edward Bruce's ambition was not satisfied; he had assisted his brother in conquering a kingdom, and he now wished to secure a crown for himself. On the 23rd of May, 1315, while England was beginning to feel the miseries of a famine which was soon to be followed by a plague, he landed at Carrickfergus in Ireland, at the head of six thousand men. He was soon joined by a large number of Irish chiefs; and they then proceeded to ravage the territory of the English colonists there, pillaging and burning down the towns; at length he caused himself to be crowned King of Ireland on the 2nd of May, 1316. His brother Robert came to his assistance, and, in spite of the resistance of the English, who held Dublin and several other important towns, the invading army overran the whole of Ireland. The northern portion of the country had been completely subjected by Edward Bruce, when King Robert was called back to his kingdom in consequence of the incursions of the English. Nineteen pitched battles besides numberless skirmishes had been fought, and had exhausted the resources of the rash conqueror, when, on the 5th of October, 1318, Edward Bruce was at length defeated and killed at Fagher, near Dundalk, and the little body of Scots who escaped returned to Scotland. The death of one man had sufficed to overthrow the slender edifice, which for three years he had been striving to raise. The independence of Scotland was more firmly established than the conquest of Ireland.

Berwick had at length fallen into the power of the Scotch; King Edward II. resolved, in 1319, to make a fresh effort to regain that town and to recommence his attempts against Scotland. On the 1st of September he laid siege to Berwick, by land and by sea; but while he was detained by the obstinate resistance of the Lord Stewart of Scotland, Douglas and Randolph, King Robert's most faithful companions, had crossed the borders into England with fifteen thousand men, carrying their ravages as far as York, so that Edward was obliged to abandon Berwick, to march against the invaders of his dominions. The Scots escaped from him and re-entered their

country; a truce of two years was concluded, and, in 1323, after several renewals of hostilities, it was followed by a new treaty, which restored peace to the two countries; not, however, without leaving in the English a feeling of animosity against the little country whose proud independence of spirit all their power had not been able to subdue.

King Edward had not taken warning by the fate of Piers Gaveston; he had become attached to a young man at his court, Hugh le Despencer, who had formerly been placed at his side by his cousin the Earl of Lancaster, and whom he soon elevated to the dignity of chamberlain. A short time afterwards he married him to Eleanor de Clare, sister of the young Earl of Gloucester, who had been killed at Bannockburn; she brought him an enormous estate upon the borders of Wales; his aunt, Margaret de Clare, had enriched Gaveston in the same manner. Le Despencer was an Englishman, and Edward had perhaps hoped to enjoy his friendship in peace; but the benefits which he heaped upon his new favourite soon excited the jealousy of the barons. At their head was the Earl of Lancaster, who was enraged at seeing preferred to himself a man who had formerly been a member of his own household. An abuse of the royal authority for the benefit of the royal favourite soon furnished a pretext to the great noblemen for resisting the king's authority. They armed their vassals; the lands of the Despencers were pillaged and their castles destroyed, in 1321. Lancaster joined in the insurrection, swearing not to lay down his arms before banishing the favourite; they advanced as far as St. Alban's, and the earl sent a messenger to the king to announce the conditions of peace. Edward was as timid as he was stubborn; he defended his friends as well as he was able, and declared that they could not be condemned without a trial. The barons marched towards London and took up their quarters in the suburbs; Parliament was convened at Westminster; and with their arms in their hands, the Earl of Lancaster and his friends accused Hugh le Despencer and his father of having usurped the royal authority, kept the king away from his

faithful barons, and illegally imposed taxes, &c. At length they demanded that they should be banished. The bishops protested that the sentence was irregular; the king gave in; the two Le Despencers left England, and the barons became so arrogant, that Queen Isabel, when making a pilgrimage to Canterbury, was refused admittance to Leeds Castle, in the county of Kent, although that fortress belonged to the crown. The governor's wife, Lady Badlesmere, even caused several arrows to be shot at the royal suite, and several of the queen's attendants were killed.

This insolence enraged the king. He punished Lord and Lady Badlesmere, and at the same time recalled the Despencers. Lancaster rallied round him all his friends, and entered into a correspondence with the Scots, who promised to invade the northern provinces. This negotiation had no other effect than to crush the popularity of the Earl of Lancaster, the Scots being so much detested. The king had already attacked the Earl of Hereford and his ally, Roger Mortimer; he had defeated them, and Mortimer was a prisoner in the Tower. Hereford had joined Lancaster, and the king was marching against them. The two earls had raised the siege of Tichnall Castle and were retreating before the royal army, when at Boroughbridge, on the borders of the Ure, Lancaster found the Governors of York and Carlisle, with a body of troops, prepared to dispute his passage. Hereford was killed upon the bridge, and, during the retreat which followed, Lancaster was made a prisoner. He was brought back in triumph to his Castle of Pontefract, and the king soon joined him there. Lancaster foresaw the fate which awaited him. "Lord," he said on being captured, kneeling before a crucifix, "I surrender to Thee, and throw myself upon Thy mercy." His conviction was certain, his treason being flagrant. Lancaster was condemned by six earls and six barons. The people insulted him while he was being led to the scaffold; he lifted his pinioned hands towards heaven. "Heavenly King, have mercy on me," he cried, "for the king of earth has abandoned me." He was beheaded on the 22nd of

March, 1322. Fourteen bannerets and as many knights also suffered the extreme penalty. Mortimer was condemned to imprisonment for life; the Despencers enriched themselves on the spoils taken from the victims; the father was created Earl of Winchester, and the enmity of the people towards the favourites was increased by the compassion which the condemned men inspired. It was found necessary to forbid the people to kneel before the portrait of the Earl of Lancaster in St. Paul's Cathedral, and rumours of miracles which had taken place at his tomb were spread throughout England, as had formerly been the case with Simon of Montfort, Earl of Leicester.

Roger Mortimer had succeeded in escaping from prison, probably not without having held some communication with Queen Isabel, who resided at the Tower during his captivity. He was in France and had just entered the service of Charles the Beautiful. The queen was enraged at the execution of his uncle, the Earl of Lancaster. When her husband came back from his expedition in the North, she received him haughtily, and manifested towards the Despencers the same hostility which she had formerly displayed towards Piers Gaveston. The King of France, Charles the Beautiful, seized the pretext of the grievances of Isabel, to take possession of the greater number of the towns and castles belonging to Edward. The latter, in return, seized upon all the property which the queen held in England, declaring that she should possess nothing while in communication with his enemies.

Isabel immediately proposed to act as mediator between her brother and her husband. The weak king fell into the trap, and allowed her to depart. She was received in France with open arms, and soon informed her husband that he would have to come and do homage to the King of France for his duchy of Aquitaine. Edward was preparing to start when he was detained in England in consequence of indisposition. The Despencers, who did not dare to accompany him into France, but who would not lose sight of him, persuaded the weak

monarch to cede Guienne and Ponthieu to his son, Prince Edward, the King of France promising to content himself with receiving homage from the young man. The Prince of Wales therefore followed his mother into France; but in vain did the king await the return of his wife and son, the queen was continually delaying; at length, she haughtily declared that her life was not safe in England, and that the Despencers were plotting against her and her son.

King Edward, astounded, defended himself as well as he was able, causing all the prelates in England to write and reassure the queen; but she would not be convinced, and when King Charles the Beautiful, tired, no doubt of the bad conduct of Isabel, and of the injunctions which he received from England, told his sister that he could no longer keep her at his court; she set out surrounded by the knights who had embraced her cause, the Earl of Kent, her husband's brother, D'Artois, John of Hainault, and, still accompanied by her favourite, Mortimer, she embarked at Dort with a little army of Frenchmen and Brabantines, to land at Orcewell in Suffolk, on the 24th of September. Scarcely had she set foot upon English soil with her son, when, in spite of all the damaging rumours which were afloat concerning her, a large number of knights flocked round her standard. The people were tired of the weakness of King Edward, of the avidity of his favourites, and of the disorder which reigned over the kingdom. When Edward sent and asked for the assistance of the citizens of London, they replied that by their charters they were not obliged to follow him into battle, but that they would be faithful to the king, the queen, and the princes, by closing their gates to the foreigners. Edward was alone with the two Despencers, the Chancellor Baldock and a few knights. Scarcely had he set out for Wales, when the people of London rose, murdered the Bishop of Exeter, who had been elevated by the king to the position of governor, and sent his head to the queen. Edward had halted at Gloucester, whence he had sent old Despencer to defend Bristol; the citizens revolted, and Despencer was compelled to surrender at the discretion of

Isabel. She immediately caused him to be executed as a traitor, and the old man's head was exposed to the public sight at Winchester. Hugh le Despencer and Chancellor Baldock, as well as the king, were wandering in the county of Glamorgan, where they had been shipwrecked, after having ineffectually endeavoured to take refuge in Ireland. Le Despencer and the chancellor were recognized and arrested. The king immediately surrendered to his enemies, having decided to share the fate of those who loved him, and who were already condemned by anticipation.

Baldock soon died of ill-treatment, and it was necessary to hasten the execution of Hugh le Despencer. He had refused to take any food since his arrest, and he was half dead when he was dragged to the scaffold to suffer the same fate as his father. The Earl of Arundel, who had formerly been at the head of the judges who had condemned Lancaster, was beheaded with two of his friends; their property was given to Mortimer.

The queen had arrived in London, Parliament had just met; and, on the 7th of January, 1327, the Bishop of Hereford, Adam Orleton, Isabel's adviser and able agent, asked this question of the assembly: "Should the father be re-established upon the throne, or ought the son to replace him?" He dwelt upon the weakness, the bad deeds, the treacherous acts of King Edward, and asked the lords to reply on the morrow to his question. The decision was not doubtful. While the barons were pronouncing, in the great hall of Westminster, the fall of Edward II., King of England, the people of London, assembled in crowds at the doors of the palace, loudly demanded his immediate condemnation. Several bishops alone had the courage to speak in favour of the unhappy king, who had not seen a sword drawn nor a bow stretched in his defence: they were insulted, and the Bishop of Rochester was trampled in the mud on leaving the palace. The young prince was proclaimed king by the public voice, and all the peers who were present swore allegiance to him on the spot.

When the queen was informed of the success of all her

schemes, she cried bitterly. "Alas!" she said, "they have deposed my husband the king. Parliament has overstepped its authority." These hypocritical tears did not deceive anybody; the young prince, Edward, alone was touched at them. "Do not be afraid, mother," said he, "I will never deprive my father of his crown." A deputation was therefore sent to the poor king, who was a prisoner in Kenilworth Castle. When Edward II. perceived the Bishop of Hereford at the head of the ambassadors, he fell on the ground, stricken with grief. The judge who had condemned the two Despencers, Sir William Trussel, advanced in the name of the Parliament, and, taking his turn to speak, told Edward that he was no longer King of England. At the same moment, Sir Thomas Blount, steward of the royal household, broke his baton, renouncing his allegiance to the king. Edward listened without complaining, and without urging anything on his own behalf, simply thanking the Parliament for having recognized the rights of his son. On the 24th of January, 1327, King Edward III. was proclaimed throughout the kingdom. Edward II. was, according to the decree of Parliament, deposed from the throne by the lords and commons, and the power was entrusted to Queen Isabel, who was to administer the affairs of the kingdom for her son, then only fifteen years of age.

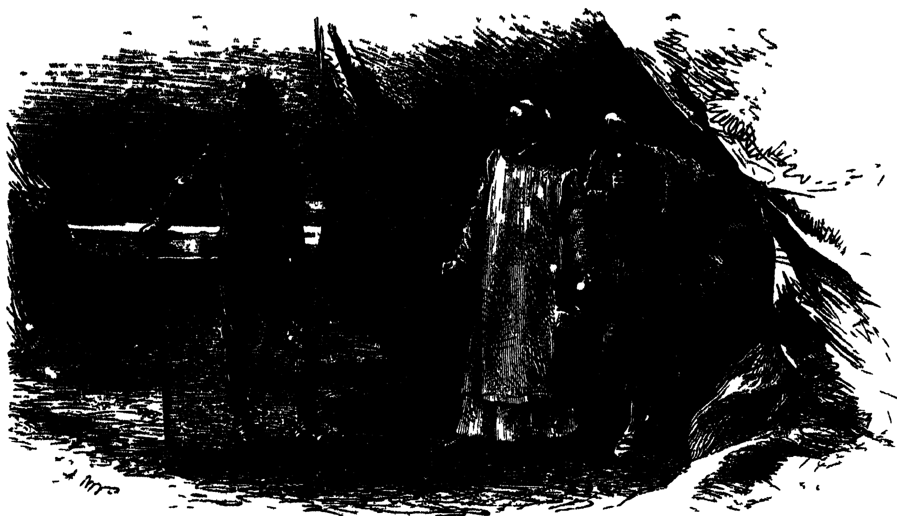
Isabel was herself under the influence of Mortimer. Edward II. being dethroned could not hope to live long. The power of the favourite over the queen became a matter for alarm; several monks preached against him; the Earl of Lancaster, to whose keeping the deposed king had been entrusted, seemed to have conceived a feeling of pity for his prisoner; the latter was removed to another place. Being consigned to the charge of Lord Berkeley and Sir John Maltravers, he was taken to Bristol; the people began to be touched at his fate. Two scoundrels who had been sent to him as gaolers dragged him out half naked and took him to Corfe Castle. The poor king asked to be allowed to dress himself; some dirty water was brought to him in a helmet. Tears rolled down his cheeks. "I have some

purer water in spite of you," he said. A crown of dry herbs had been placed upon his head. At length, moving from place to place, the dethroned monarch was brought to Berkeley Castle, on the river Severn. An attempt was made to poison him, but without success. At length, one night, the governor of the castle being



away, piercing cries were heard, and immediately afterwards all was silent again; the inhabitants of the neighbourhood shuddered on hearing them. On the morrow, when the doors were opened, the death of Edward II. was announced, and the country people were admitted to survey the corpse of him who had been their

king: the expression of agony which rested upon the once handsome features of the unhappy monarch, terrified all who saw it. The body was taken to the abbey of Gloucester and buried soon afterwards; but the people went in crowds to the tomb of this king whom no one had defended during his lifetime. The offerings made in his honour at the convent were so considerable that the monks were enabled to add an aisle to their church. This unfortunate monarch, so weak and so frivolous, consistent only in his affection, so harshly abandoned and so cruelly murdered, was not yet forty-three years of age when he expired on the 21st of September, 1327.



CHAPTER XI.

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR. EDWARD III. (1327—1377.)

THE young king, Edward III., was but fifteen years of age when he was raised to the throne of his deposed father. The Parliament appointed a council of Regency, composed of five prelates and six great noblemen, and consigned the young monarch into the keeping of the Earl of Lancaster. No power was formally vested in the dowager queen; but her debts were discharged, and a large pension was granted to her, by means of which she was enabled to strengthen her own influence and increase the authority of Mortimer.

While England had been engrossed in its internal dissensions and struggles, Scotland had been recovering from the effects of its misfortunes, under the firm government of Robert Bruce. The thirst for vengeance raged, however, in the hearts of all the Scots; and respect for the truce was powerless to restrain them. Hearing that King Edward II. had been dethroned, and that a council of Regency had been appointed, they crossed the

frontier on the 3rd of February, 1327, and began to lay waste the northern counties. Their army gradually increased in numbers. King Robert was ill, but his two faithful friends, James, earl of Douglas, and Randolph, earl of Moray, were at the head of his troops. The Scottish army consisted entirely of mounted soldiers, whose light, robust steeds, steady as themselves, bore them with the swiftness of the wind, without rest, and almost without provender. No baggage, no tents,—a bag of oatmeal in front of each horseman, under his saddle an iron plate, which served for baking his cakes; the English farms and villages furnished the rest.

Rumours of the ravages to which the northern counties had been subjected, touched the feelings of the young king, and awakened his martial ardour. In the beginning of July, the English troops, supported by an army corps from Hainault, the members of which had been brought with great difficulty to live at peace with their English allies, arrived at Durham. The exact whereabouts of the Scottish army was unknown; but the king pressed forward in pursuit. Like his enemies, he had left the camp baggage behind him; after a week of pursuit, the Scots were still invisible, and the English, on the verge of starvation, were beginning to murmur. The king promised the honour of knighthood and a pension of a hundred livres to whoever should bring tidings of the enemy. They had crossed the Wear; on the fourth day a messenger galloped up on horseback. "Sire," said Thomas Rokeby, "the Scots are within three leagues of this spot, encamped upon a mountain. I have been their prisoner for a week; but they liberated me that I might come and inform you that they await your arrival." The king immediately marched towards the enemy.

They had arrived on the banks of the Wear; and this time the Scots were perceived, encamped on the summit of a hill. They were drawn up in battle array, but they did not stir. Edward despatched a herald to them, with a proposal that they should cross the river, in order that the combat might take place upon the open plain. "I have not come here for the

king's pleasure," said Douglas, "and I will not leave my post for love of him. If he is not satisfied, let him cross the water and drive us before him." The undertaking was too perilous, and the two armies remained in their respective positions for two days. On the third night, the Scots raised their camp, and were soon afterwards perceived to have taken up a still stronger position, upon another hill. The King of England broke up his camp likewise, and followed them. For eighteen days the two armies had watched each other without result, not a blow being struck; the English troops were sleeping in their tents, when a loud cry was heard amid the silence: "Douglas! Douglas! Death to the English robbers." The terrified soldiers rose in confusion, and in a half-sleeping condition, and groped about in the dark for their weapons. Meanwhile sounds of strife were heard, and suddenly the ropes supporting the royal tent were cut, and by the side of the couch whereon the young king was sleeping, Black Douglas, the most valiant knight in Scotland, appeared like a threatening phantom. The chamberlain and chaplain of the young king sprang forward to protect their master. The youth had hidden himself within the folds of the tent. Douglas, however, did not pursue his adventure further; sounding the horn, he recalled the three hundred men who had followed him. "What have you done?" asked Randolph, when the Scots had regained their intrenchments. "We have shed a little blood, my lord, that is all," said Douglas. "We should have crossed over with the whole of our army," insisted his friend; "our provisions are exhausted." On the following night, the Scots disappeared in silence, carrying with them a rich booty, while King Edward, incensed and humiliated, again marched towards York, whither his affianced bride, Philippa of Hainault, was being conducted by John of Hainault. The marriage was celebrated on St. Paul's day, 1328. The king was sixteen years of age, while the queen was one year younger. Peace had just been concluded with Scotland; the independence of that kingdom had thereby been acknowledged; the crown jewels, which had been formerly seized by Edward I., had been

restored, and the little Princess Joan, who was betrothed to David, the young son of Robert Bruce, had been taken to Berwick and given up to the Scots. It seemed as though the deliverer of Scotland had waited for this great triumph before going to his last rest. He died in the following year, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, leaving wise counsels to his countrymen; and to his faithful friend, the good lord James Douglas, the task of carrying his heart to Palestine, in order that his vow to visit the Holy Land might be fulfilled. The evils of a minority threatened Scotland at the very moment when England was escaping from that calamity.

The arrogance of Mortimer had increased with his power, and the great noblemen were beginning to chafe under the yoke which he imposed upon them. The Earl of Lancaster had been the first to make an attempt against the favourite; but he had been defeated, notwithstanding that he obtained the temporary support of the king's uncles, the Earl of Kent and the Earl of Norfolk. Mortimer ravaged the possessions of Lancaster like a conquered kingdom. A rumour had been spread abroad that King Edward II. was not dead, and the Earl of Kent had perhaps been encouraged in this illusion, which was the cause of his ruin. He was accused of high treason, and condemned for the strange crime of having endeavoured to replace a dead man upon the throne. The execution took place on the 19th of May, 1330, in spite of the noble birth of the victim, and the public indignation reached its climax. The young king had hitherto remained silent concerning State matters, and had appeared as a docile instrument in the hands of his mother and Mortimer, although he had kept aloof from them since his marriage, not permitting his young wife to frequent a corrupt and licentious court.

It was on the 13th of June, 1330, that a son was born to King Edward, who was to achieve a mighty reputation as Prince of Wales. The young king, already a father at eighteen years of age, began to feel the disgrace of his situation, and to experience some remorse for the wrong which was being per-

petrated in his name. Slowly and prudently, he communicated his opinions to Lord Montacute, one of his advisers. A Parliament was convoked at Nottingham, in the month of October, the king being then lodged in the castle with Mortimer and his mother. On the night of the 19th, the keys of the fortress had been brought as usual to Queen Isabel, when Lord Montacute, accompanied by several friends, crept silently into the vaults of the castle, which had been opened to him by the governor. The king awaited him with great anxiety at the door of the great tower. The conspirators ascended a dark staircase and found themselves at the door of the queen's antechamber. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the voice of Mortimer was heard discussing with some of his adherents. Montacute and his friends broke open the door, and killed two sentinels who endeavoured to defend it. Hearing the commotion, the queen ran forward, calling loudly upon her son, who had remained behind the door, but whose presence she guessed. "My dear son," she cried, "spare the gentle Mortimer, my beloved cousin." The favourite was, however, dragged out, and, at daybreak, he was already on his way, under strong escort, to the Tower of London. Nottingham rang with sounds of joy.

The king had seized the reins of government; this he announced to his subjects in dissolving the Parliament and convoking a new representative assembly at Westminster. On the 26th of November, 1330, the favourite was cited before his judges, the king himself being present at the trial. His crimes were notorious; and consequently the decision did not long remain doubtful. As he had put Hugh le Despencer to death without allowing him time to make any defence, Mortimer was himself drawn to Tyburn and hanged, with Sir Simon Beresford, one of his accomplices. His property, however, was not confiscated, and his family retained the title of Earl of March, which had been granted by the queen to her favourite. Isabel was imprisoned in the castle of Rising, treated with respect by her son, who paid a visit to her every year and ministered liberally to all her necessities; but she never again left her

retreat, in which she lived during more than twenty-seven years afterwards.

The Regent of Scotland, the Earl of Moray, was dead. The valiant Douglas had been slain in an expedition against the Moors of Spain, the first episode in the crusade which he had undertaken in company with the heart of Bruce. Scotland was now governed by the Earl of Mar, a warrior far inferior to the great champions of liberty, the friends and supporters of Robert Bruce. The time had come when England was to be raised out of the disgrace of the last treaty. The pretensions of Edward Baliol, the son of the exiled king, were advanced by several English peers who had formerly been deprived of property pertaining to them in Scotland. Baliol advanced into the northern counties, and a certain number of Scottish malcontents crossed the frontier and rallied round his standard. He then marched into Scotland, but soon confronted two armies superior to his own; but a skilful movement placed the invaders in an advantageous position; the Earl of Mar imprudently gave battle in a defile on Duplin Heath, where he was defeated and killed, with many others. Baliol had had time to fortify himself within Perth before the arrival of the Earl of Mar, and the Scottish fleet was destroyed by the little squadron brought over by the pretender. Baliol's forces were increasing day by day; he was crowned at Scone on the 2nd of September, having secretly renewed to King Edward III. the allegiance which his father had rendered to Edward I.

But the crown thus acquired in seven weeks, was destined to be lost in less than three months. On the night of the 16th of December, the new king was taken by surprise at Annan, in the county of Dumfries, by a Scottish corps under the command of the young Earl of Moray and Sir Archibald Douglas. Baliol, in a semi-naked condition, and mounted upon a barebacked horse, which he had been unable to properly equip, for want of time, contrived to escape to the English frontier, leaving his father, Henry, dead behind him. King Edward received him so amicably that the Scottish people, indignant at the support accorded

to the pretender, invaded the northern counties of England on several occasions, carrying their ravages to such an extent that King Edward determined to enter Scotland. In the month of May, 1333, he joined Baliol, who, during two months, had been besieging the town of Berwick. The garrison was preparing to surrender, when, on the 19th of July, Archibald Douglas, now Regent of Scotland, appeared in sight of the town. The English army was posted on the heights of Halidon Hill, protected by the marshes. The Scots were excited by the peril threatening Berwick; they attacked the enemy in spite of obstacles. Arrows fell thick in their midst during their passage across the marshes, and disorder had already broken out in their ranks, when they began their fierce onslaught on the hill. The assault was so vigorous that for a moment victory seemed to incline in their favour; but the regent fell, and with him and beside him, his most valiant knights. King Edward sprang forward in pursuit of the Scots, who were beginning to fly. Lord Darcy, who was in command of the Irish peasants who had joined as auxiliaries, slaughtered the stragglers. Scotland had never suffered so lamentable a defeat. King David and his wife took refuge in France, and spent several years at Château-Gaillard. Baliol was reinstalled upon the throne, not, however, without ceding to his powerful ally the finest counties in the south of Scotland, to the general indignation of the Scottish people. They soon compelled him to take refuge in the territory which he had thus abandoned to England, where he maintained his position with great difficulty, although supported from time to time by fresh troops from England. A more ambitious project had been formed in the mind of the King of England, and the war with Scotland languished, while Edward was dreaming of conquering France.

The King of France, Charles IV., surnamed the Fair, had died in 1328; and, a short time after his death, the queen his wife had given birth to a daughter. The Salic law prohibiting the accession of females to the throne, the peers of the kingdom and the States-general had decreed that the crown belonged to the cousin of the deceased king, Philip of Valois, grandson of Philip

the Bold, by his youngest son, Charles of Valois; and the new sovereign had taken undisputed possession of the throne. King Edward III. was scarcely sixteen years of age, and, although maintaining from that time forth, in England, that his right was superior to that of Philip of Valois, his mother Isabel being the daughter of Philip the Fair, he accepted the invitation of the King of France to render fealty and homage to him for the Duchy of Aquitaine, and again performed the same ceremony in 1331, when he had attained his majority and was king *de facto*. But, in 1336, the young King of England felt that he was securely seated upon his throne. He was piqued by the support which Philip of Valois openly gave to the Scotch; and he publicly declared that the peers of France and the States-general had acted as rogues and robbers rather than as judges, and that for the future he would not recognize their decisions, but that he would maintain his own just rights. Thus began that disastrous war which has been called the "Hundred Years' War," but which, in reality, was waged from 1338 until 1453, during the reigns of five kings of France—Philip VI., John the Good, Charles V., Charles VI., and Charles VII.—and of as many kings of England—Edward III., Richard II., Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI. It cost the lives of millions of men, brought plague and famine with it, and caused unheard-of misery, without any result for the two nations other than a feeling of international hatred which has scarcely died out in our own time.

The preparations on both sides were gigantic. The English people looked with favour upon the war against France, and, in spite of the Magna Charta, the king was allowed to seize the Cornish tin and all the wool grown during the year, although they had already granted to him all the subsidies, tallage, and loans which he had demanded. Edward embarked at Orwell on the 15th of July, 1338, and landed four days afterwards at Antwerp. The Count of Flanders was an ally of the King of France, Philip; but his towns scarcely obeyed him. They were then under the influence of a brewer of Ghent, named Jacques van Arteveldt, who contracted a friendship with King Edward. He had negotiated

with even more illustrious allies; the Emperor of Germany, the Dukes of Brabant and Gueldres, the Counts of Hainault and Namur. All had received his money; but the troops did not arrive, and when, on the 1st of July, 1339, the King of England at length succeeded in crossing the French frontier, the Counts of Namur and Hainault immediately abandoned him, and his other confederates soon did likewise. The king was compelled to return, after having, by the advice of Arteveldt, assumed the title of King of France, and added to his coat of arms the lily side by side with the lions of England. The Parliament, as ardent in the cause of the war as the king himself, voted enormous subsidies, and, on the 22nd of June, 1340, Edward again left England, to attack the French vessels of war, huddled together in the port of Sluys. Queen Philippa had accompanied her husband, taking with her a great number of ladies in waiting, who were placed in the rear. The French and Genoese vessels hired by King Philip were numerous and very large; when they sailed out of port, attached together by iron chains and formed in four divisions, and advanced to dispute his passage, Edward uttered a cry of joy. "Ah!" said he, "I have long desired to fight with the French. So shall I meet some of them to-day by the grace of God and St. George." He began to gain the offing; his adversaries already imagined that he declined an engagement, but he was desirous of avoiding the ardent rays of the sun and of attacking briskly the first division of the French fleet, of which he soon made himself master in spite of a vigorous resistance.

A reinforcement arrived at the same time under the command of Lord Morley; the victors thereupon assailed the three French divisions at the same time. The French sailors became alarmed; they could not manage their vessels nor disengage them to facilitate a retreat; after having fought during several hours, the French and Genoese sprang into the water, in order to escape by swimming. Many of them were killed, and the defeat was so decisive that nobody was bold enough to communicate the news to King Philip. His court jester presented himself before the French monarch. "The English are cowards," he said.



THE FRENCH AND GENOESE SPRANG INTO THE WATER.

"Why so?" inquired the king. "Because they had not the courage to spring into the sea at Sluys as did the French and Normans." The king guessed the sad truth. Edward had landed on French soil, surrounded by the allies whom his victory had attracted round him; he laid siege to Saint-Omer and Tournay, sending thence a challenge to Philip of Valois, proposing to him to arrange their quarrel by a singular contest. He suggested that the fate of the two kingdoms should be entrusted to a hundred combatants on each side, or that a day should be fixed on which a pitched battle should be fought. Philip answered with disdain; and, as in the preceding year, he left his enemy free to exhaust his strength and resources on insignificant places, without ever according him the opportunity of a general engagement. The coffers of the King of England soon became empty, and his allies refused to fight; he was compelled to consent to the armistice which Pope Benedict XII. advised, and he returned to his kingdom infuriated by the ill-success of a campaign which had begun under brilliant auspices. He unexpectedly appeared in London, cast three judges into prison, deposed the chancellor and the treasurer, who had not been able, he said, to supply him with the subsidies necessary to his requirements, and immediately engaged in a contention with the Archbishop of Canterbury, president of the council. The archbishop exonerated himself before the Parliament, which, according to its wise custom, refused the subsidies until the king had promised to reform some existing abuses, and to give new guarantees against others in the future.

Meanwhile King David Bruce had returned to Scotland; he was eighteen years of age, was handsome, well shaped, and skilled in all athletic exercises. The joy of his subjects, therefore, was great at his arrival. Baliol had been drove back into England, and, notwithstanding several attempts of the young Scottish king upon the northern counties, Edward concluded an armistice with him in 1342, entrusting Baliol with the task of defending the English frontier, so much was he absorbed in the war with France, and in thoughts of revenge for his past checks.

A new opening had presented itself to him upon the French territory. John III., duke of Brittany, had died without issue in 1341, and his brother, John de Montfort, had immediately seized his treasure, as well as several important towns. But Joan of Penthièvre, otherwise Joan the Lame, wife of Charles, count of Blois, claimed the duchy as the daughter of Guy de Montfort, a younger brother of the deceased duke. The Count of Blois was the nephew of Philip of Valois, and he had invoked the aid of his uncle. Montfort had been summoned to Paris to render an account of his claims. After having appeared before the king he had fled secretly, and his first care had been to repair to London, there to do homage to the King of England in respect of Brittany. Edward had promised to support him, but already a French army had marched into Brittany. John de Montfort had been captured at Nantes, and his wife, Joan of Flanders, had with difficulty contrived to escape with her son to the castle of Hennebon, where she was besieged by the Duke of Normandy. The countess "had indeed the heart of a man and a lion," says Froissart, and she valiantly encouraged her partisans, while waiting the succour which she had demanded from England. The wind was unfavourable; the English vessels did not arrive, and treachery began to do its work in the town, when Joan, leaning at her casement, perceived sails in the horizon "Behold there! behold there!" she cried, "the succour which I have so long desired." The rising tide brought to her Gautier de Manny, a valiant knight of Hainault, who had become a faithful servant to the King of England, and one of the most illustrious amongst his warriors. He was accompanied by a goodly number of knights and men-at-arms, and soon caused the siege to be raised. But the war continued in Lower Brittany. With singular inconsistency the King of France, who owed his elevation to the throne to the Salic law, was maintaining in Brittany the cause of female succession, while Edward was defending the rights of the male sex, which he had refused to recognize in the case of Philip of Valois. An armistice enabled the Countess de Montfort to cross over to England to obtain reinforcements;

when she returned to Brittany, she was accompanied by Robert of Artois, brother-in-law of King Philip and his most mortal enemy. The town of Vannes was captured and recaptured. Robert of Artois wounded, succeeded, although not without great difficulty, in escaping to England, there to die at the very moment when Edward was setting sail with the resolution of directing the war in Brittany in person. He landed in the month of October, 1343, at Hennebon, with twelve thousand men, and immediately laid siege to Vannes, Rennes, and Nantes, with no other result than the devastation of the country, already overrun by so many enemies, and the retreat of Charles of Blois, whose forces had been greatly reduced.

The arrival of the Duke of Normandy, the eldest son of King Philip, soon enabled the French troops to act once more upon the aggressive by besieging Edward, encamped before Vannes. The two armies were suffering severely from the inclemency of the weather. The Duke of Normandy dreaded the reinforcements which were expected by the English. Edward foresaw that his provisions would shortly be exhausted, when the legates of the Pope arrived, and, by dint of their exertions, a truce of three years was arranged; the siege of Vannes was then raised.

Notwithstanding the truce, the war still raged in Brittany. King Philip of Valois aroused a widespread feeling of indignation by arresting several Breton noblemen at a tournament, among others, Oliver de Clisson, and by causing them to be beheaded without trial, as guilty of relations with the English. The head of Clisson was sent to Nantes; but the king had created an implacable foe in the person of Joan of Belville, the widow of Clisson, who immediately armed all her vassals and soon vied with Joan de Montfort herself in courage and intrepidity. The Countess had recently had the satisfaction of seeing her husband, who had escaped from prison, where he had been incarcerated for six years. He brought with him, from England, a small body of troops, which he landed at Hennebon in the middle of September, 1345; but his health

was impaired, and he died on the 26th of the same month, naming King Edward guardian of his son.

Hostilities recommenced openly. During the truce the two kings had made preparations for a desperate struggle. Among the taxes which King Philip had devised for the purpose of filling his coffers, was the monopoly of salt. "It is indeed by the *Salic* law that Philip of Valois reigns," said Edward. "The King of England is but a wool merchant," was the reply at the court of France. The Parliament had granted fresh subsidies, recommending merely to the king that he should put an end to the war promptly either by battle or by treaty.

The Earl of Derby was already in Guienne, retaking, one by one, all the places which had been captured by the enemy, when King Edward landed in Flanders, on the 26th of June, 1345, in order to obtain an interview with the deputies of the great towns of Flanders. The citizens, under the command of Jacques van Arteveldt, had by degrees deprived their ruler of his power, and King Edward had conceived the hope of substituting his son, the Prince of Wales, for Count Louis of Flanders, who refused to renounce his alliance with the King of France. But when he unfolded his plans before the deputies of the cities, and although he was ardently supported by Arteveldt, the Flemings eyed each other, and asked that they might be allowed to consult their fellow-citizens. "Yes," said the King of England, "by all means;" and he waited at Sluys while Arteveldt proceeded to Bruges and to Yprès, there to plead the cause of his patron and ally. He placed too much reliance, however, upon his good city of Ghent; there the disaffection on his return was general. "They began to murmur and *bouter trois têtes en un chaperon* (says the *Chronicle*), saying, 'Here is a man who is too much the master, and who would compel the county of Flanders to do his behest, which cannot be tolerated.'" "As Jacques van Arteveldt rode through the streets he soon perceived that there was some change in the feeling towards him, and returning quickly to his residence, he caused the doors thereof to be closed."

This precaution was not taken too soon; a furious crowd already surrounded the house, demanding the public treasure of Flanders, which had been sent, they said, to England by Arteveldt. "He therefore replied very meekly, 'Verily, gentlemen, as to the treasures of Flanders, I have not taken one single penny.' 'No, no,' they cried, 'we know the truth, that you have emptied the public coffers and sent the contents to England secretly, for which act you must suffer death.' When Arteveldt heard these words he clasped his hands and burst into tears, saying at the same time, 'Gentlemen, such as I am so have you made me, and you formerly swore that you would defend and protect me. Do you not know how trade languished in this country? I restored it to you. And then I governed you so peacefully that you have had everything at will: wheat, wool, and every species of commodity with which you have been clothed and become fat.' But the people cried out, 'Come down, and do not preach to us from so great a height.' (Arteveldt was at a window.) Thereupon Arteveldt closed the shutter of the window, and determined to go out at the rear and take refuge in a church which adjoined his residence; but already the doors had been burst open, admitting more than four hundred persons, all eager to capture him. Finally, he was captured among them and slain on the spot without mercy. Thus ended the career of Arteveldt, who in his time was so great a ruler in Flanders. To the poorer classes he owed his princely elevation, and at the hands of the malignant populace he came by his end."

When the news of the death of Arteveldt reached King Edward at Sluys, he was irritated and despondent; all his schemes were frustrated through the loss of his faithful ally, and he therefore set sail for England, vowing to be avenged on the Flemings. The latter greatly feared his resentment; the wool which was so necessary in their manufactures was imported almost exclusively from England. They despatched an embassy to London for the purpose of exonerating themselves, and in order to hint at the possibility of a marriage between the

daughter of King Edward and the young *damoiseau*, the heir of Flanders. "Thus would the county of Flanders always remain to one of your children." These representations, together with others, softened greatly the resentment of King Edward, who finally declared himself well pleased with the Flemings, as were the Flemings with him; thus by degrees was the death of Jacques van Arteveldt forgotten on both sides.

Meanwhile the preparations for the passage to France were completed. The army was numerous and spirited; the project openly announced was to pass into Gascony, there to sustain the Earl of Derby, who was hemmed in by the Duke of Normandy; but Godefroy d'Harcourt, a French baron in exile in England, urged Edward to attack Normandy, a rich and undefended country. The king resolved to adopt the course proposed, and, on the 12th of July, 1346, he disembarked at La Hogue; immediately on landing his foot slipped, and he fell. "Come hither into our ship, *cher sire*," said the English knights, "for behold a little omen for you;" to which the king replied pointedly and without hesitation, "Why so? It is a very good sign, for the land evidently wishes for me." At which all the barons were greatly rejoiced.

The soil of Normandy was unwise to wish for King Edward, for he pillaged and burnt down everything before him. Barfleur, Carentan, and Saint-Lô had already succumbed when he appeared before Caen. The burghers had mustered all their forces, and the Count d'Eu, the Constable of France, with the Count de Tancarville, was there, supported by gallant knights. "But as soon as the burghers beheld the approach of the English, who were approaching in three lines, close and compact, and saw these banners and these pennants flying and streaming in the wind, and heard the cries of these archers whom they were not accustomed to see or hear, they were so alarmed and discomfited among themselves that nothing in the world could have hindered their taking to flight; accordingly they dispersed towards their town in disorder, without consulting the Constable of France in the matter."

When the knights found that they were no longer supported by the burghers they surrendered to Sir Thomas Holland, and the King of England commanded that no harm should be done in the city of Caen, where "the English remained during three days, and therein captured such magnificent booty, marvellous to think of, which they immediately despatched to England, while the king was riding towards Paris," taking Louviers, Vernon, and Verneuil. They arrived at Poissy. The quartermasters of the English army even advanced as far as Saint-Germain, Montjoie, Saint-Cloud, Boulogne, and Bourg-la-Reine, "whereat the inhabitants of Paris were grievously disquieted."

King Philip had convoked all his followers, and a large army was beginning to assemble round him; the French endeavoured to gain time, in order to muster in numbers and overwhelm their enemies by superior forces. The depredations committed around Paris had meanwhile spread uneasiness at the court, and the king proceeded to St. Denis, where his allies were assembled, "the King of Bohemia, John of Hainault, who had become French; the Duke of Lorraine, the Count of Flanders, the Count of Blois, and a great number of barons and knights: when the inhabitants of Paris saw that their sovereign was leaving them, they were more alarmed than before, and came and knelt down before him. 'Ah! sire and noble king, what would you do? Would you thus depart and leave the good city of Paris? Here your enemies are but two leagues distant and soon will be in this city, where we have not and shall not have any one to defend us against them!' 'Fear nothing, my good folk,' said the king, 'the English will not come to you, for I shall march against them and attack them, howsoever they may be.'"

King Edward had left Poissy on the 16th of August, 1346, taking the road to Picardy; he was expecting a reinforcement of the Flemings, who had promised to invade the French territory, and he was anxious to be nearer to his auxiliaries. King Philip followed closely upon his steps. The army of the French monarch increased day by day, and he hoped to overtake his enemies, in order to give battle to them before they could cross

the Somme. The English were vainly seeking a ford, and tidings had been received that Philip had arrived at Amiens. Edward had caused all the prisoners who had been taken in the county of Ponthieu to be brought to Oisemont, where he was encamped, and said to them "very courteously, 'Is there a man among you who knows of a passage which should be below Abbeville, where we and our army may cross without danger? If there is any one who will inform us of this, we will release him from prison, as well as twenty of his comrades, in gratitude to him.' Whereupon a fellow named Gobin Agace, who had been born and bred near the passage of the Blanche-Tache, advanced and said to the king, 'Sire, yes, in the name of God, I know it and will conduct you to it.' When the King of England heard these words, he was rejoiced, and orders were given to his soldiery to be in readiness by sunrise; for the salt tide flowed as high as the Blanche-Tache, and it was desirable to take advantage of the ebb for crossing over." On arriving before the ford, they there saw a noble knight named Godemar de Fay, who bravely defended the passage, "but he was defeated with all his men," and the English found themselves on the other side, whither King Philip was eager to follow them, when he had heard the news; but the flood tide had already returned and it was necessary to wait until the morrow, while King Edward, who was still riding forward had taken possession of Le Crotoy, and had arrived at the county of Ponthieu.

He was in the open country not far from Crécy, when he said to his men, "Let us halt here for awhile. I will go no further until I shall have seen our enemies, for I stand upon the rightful inheritance of that noble lady my mother, which was given to her on her marriage; so will I defend it against my adversary, Philip of Valois!" And the king and his followers encamped on the open plain, the king superintending all its labours. For his army was small in comparison with that of the king of France, who was constantly being joined by fresh barons and allies who were unable to find quarters in the good town of Abbeville and were encamped in the surrounding neighbourhood."

It was on the morning of the 26th of August; King Edward had attended mass and taken the communion, as had also his son, the Prince of Wales; and he had drawn up his men in three battle corps, entrusting the first to the command of the young prince, supported by the Earls of Warwick and Oxford; Northampton and Arundel were placed at the head of the second, while the third the king reserved for himself. "When the three divisions were arranged, and every earl, baron, and knight knew what he had to do, the King of England, seated upon a small white palfrey, and staff in his hand, marched slowly from line to line admonishing and exhorting the earls, the barons, and the knights to understand and reflect that for his honour they must guard and defend his right, and he said these things to them smiling so pleasantly and with so joyous a manner, that whoever had been previously quite dejected began to take comfort on hearing and beholding him. He then commanded that all the men should eat at their ease and drink a draught; after which they sat down upon the ground with their casques and crossbows in front of them, in order to be more fresh and better prepared on the arrival of their enemies, for it was the intention of the King of England to await his enemy, the King of France, upon that spot, and there to oppose him and his power."

Meanwhile King Philip had marched forward with all his forces, despatching before him four of his best knights to examine the positions of the English. "Sire," said, on his return, the most renowned amongst them, called the Monk of Basèle, "the English are drawn up and arranged in good order, and await you. Therefore it is well that your men should halt in the fields and rest for the remainder of this day, for they are fatigued. It is late, and to-morrow you will be able with more leisure to consider on which side you can attack your enemies, for you may rest assured that they will await your coming."

The king perceived the wisdom of the advice, and the quartermasters of the army rode on, one in front and the other in the rear, exclaiming, "Halt, banners! in the name of the Lord and of his Highness St. Denis." The foremost among them obeyed

at once and drew up; but not so those in the rear, who still urged their horses forward, saying they would not stop until they had gone as far as those in advance of them." Whereupon the front ranks recommenced their onward march "and through their great pride and vanity, neither the king nor his quartermasters could exact obedience from them, for there were such distinguished warriors and such a large number of great noblemen, that each desired on this occasion to show his power."

This marching soon brought them within sight of the English. When the French knights in the front ranks first saw them, they were smitten with shame at their disorderly appearance, and fell back a few steps; those who were behind thought that an engagement had taken place, and that they had been defeated; they pressed forward with all the citizens and inhabitants of Abbeville who had followed the army. When they saw the enemy they cried, "Death to them! Death to them!" drawing and brandishing at the same time their swords; the confusion increased every minute.

King Philip had seen the enemy, as well as his soldiers, "and his blood was stirred, for he hated them." He forgot all; the prudent advice of the Monk of Basèle, the fatigue of his troops and their disorder; and he exclaimed, "Send our Genoese troops in front, and let us begin the battle in the name of God and of His Highness St. Denis."

The Genoese soldiers were weary after their long march; they murmured; at the same instant a violent tempest arose; the rain fell in torrents! They were in the presence of the English troops, who had risen in "very good order, and without any alarm," and had taken up the positions assigned to them. When the sky became clear again the sun shone in the faces of the French soldiers; the Genoese shouted as they marched to the combat, "so very loud that it was marvellous, in order to terrify the English; but they kept quite quiet and made no show." The crossbow-men began to shoot; but in the midst of their compact numbers the redoubtable English arrows were pouring down like hail, and the Genoese, "who had

not learnt to encounter such archers as those from England, when they felt these bolts and arrows which pierced their arms, heads, and lips, were immediately discomfited, and fell back upon the bulk of the army."

The knights were ready, lance in hand, awaiting their turn. King Philip became incensed on beholding the rout of the Genoese, who impeded his progress. "Now then," he cried, "kill all this rabble who bar the way to no purpose." And the unhappy Genoese fell by the swords of their allies as they had previously fallen by the arrows of their enemies. The French horsemen waded through their blood to approach the English.

The mêlée commenced, terrible and confused; the old King of Bohemia, blind and surrounded by his followers, inquired how matters were progressing. This was at the moment when the Genoese were being slaughtered. "They fall back upon each other, and prevent our advancing," said his knights. "Ah!" replied the king, "this is the signal for us; therefore, I beg you, my men, friends and comrades, to lead me so far forward that I may wield a sword against the enemy." And they, fearing to lose the king in the confusion, bound their horses together by the bridles, and "placed the king their lord in front, and thus fell upon the enemy; on whom the king inflicted blows one after the other, and all remained there and not one stirred," for all the knights were on the morrow found dead around their master.

Meanwhile the King of England did not fight; he had not even donned his helmet, and contemplated the battle from a little eminence. The French cavalry were closely pressing the Prince of Wales; the Earl of Northampton demanded reinforcements from the king. "Is my son dead or overthrown, or so wounded that he cannot help himself?" asked Edward of the messenger. "No, my lord, but he is in the thick of the fray and is in great need of your assistance." "Return to those who send you," retorted the king, "and tell them not to send a request again while my son is still alive, but to let the youth win his spurs; for I intend, if it please God, that this day be his." And thus was it done.

The French were exhausting themselves in vain; their numbers and their valour had not been able to triumph over the disorder and the unskilful arrangement of the troops. Their best warriors lay stretched upon the field of battle and nightfall approached. John of Hainault seized the bridle of the horse upon which the King of France was seated, and dragged him away from the struggle. They rode along in silence; five horsemen only followed the king. They arrived at the gate of a castle, but the drawbridge was raised. "Open," said Philip, "it is the unfortunate King of France who entreats you." After resting for awhile he resumed his journey towards Amiens, while the English, who had not pursued the enemy, were gathering together by torchlight around the tent of King Edward; the latter had just left the hill and advanced towards the prince, whom he embraced. "My gallant son," he said, "God has endowed you with great perseverance; you are my son, and have loyally justified your title; you are worthy to hold land." The dead being interred, King Edward marched towards Calais, to which he laid siege on the 31st of August. The town was strong, and the garrison was known to be resolute. The English proceeded to build a town of wood around the ramparts. King Philip had recalled from Guyenne the Duke of Normandy, thus relieving the Earl of Derby, who was closely besieged in Bordeaux, and Sir Walter de Manny, who was defending Aiguillon. These two knights had nothing more at present to do than to rejoin King Edward before Calais. They did not know how long a time was destined to elapse before the surrender of that town.

The position of the King of France was becoming serious; he endeavoured to divert the attention of the enemy. His ally David, king of Scotland, had promised to attempt an invasion of England; the moment seemed propitious, all the English commanders and knights were beyond the sea. At the end of September, 1246, David marched therefore into the county of Cumberland with a considerable army, pillaging and sacking everything on their way. Queen Philippa had already levied

some troops, and at Newcastle, where she was stationed, she was better informed of the movements of the Scots than the latter were of her preparations for resistance. The English army assembled in the park of Auckland unknown to King David. No commander-in-chief had been appointed; but four prelates and as many barons marched at the head of the troops, "and the good dame, Queen Philippa, prayed and admonished them to do their duty well," says Froissart. As she was returning to Newcastle, on the 17th of October, Douglas, the Lord of Liddesdale, who was coming back from a plundering expedition, fell among the English, whose presence he did not suspect, and with difficulty cut his way through them. The King of Scotland immediately drew up his forces on the plain of Nevil's Cross. He fought valiantly; but, having been twice wounded, he was made a prisoner by a plain esquire, named John Copeland, who conducted him to his castle. The Scottish earls and barons lay stretched upon the field of battle, or had fallen alive into the hands of their enemies. The queen was rejoicing at Newcastle; she sent to John Copeland, commanding that the King of Scotland should be given up to her. "I will surrender him to no man or woman except my lord, the King of England," replied the worthy esquire; "and be not uneasy upon his account, for I intend to keep him so carefully that I will render good account of him." The queen was not quite satisfied, however, and with the good news of victory the reply of the stubborn esquire arrived at Calais. "King Edward had great joy in the good fortune that God had bestowed on his people, and he immediately summoned John Copeland to come to him at Calais. The esquire placed his prisoner in a place of safety "in a strong castle, on the borders of Northumberland and Galloway, and proceeded to Calais, to the quarters of the king."

"Welcome," said Edward, on seeing Copeland, "my faithful esquire, who by your valour have made a prisoner of our adversary the King of Scotland." "Sire," said John, kneeling, "God in His great goodness has so willed it that He has delivered the King of Scotland into my hands, for He can, if it please Him,

bestow His grace upon a poor esquire as well as upon a great nobleman. And, sire, do not bear me any ill-will if I did not immediately surrender him to the queen, for it is to you that I have sworn allegiance." The king smiled. "But you will now take your prisoner, John," he said, "and take him to my wife." And he loaded with presents the esquire, who returned well content. King David was promptly lodged in the Tower of London.

The war still continued in Brittany. Charles of Blois had been made a prisoner before Roche-Derrien, on the 18th of June, 1347, and had joined King David in his captivity; while Joan the Lame was maintaining the struggle against the allies of the Count of Montfort, who were still directed by her mother, the Countess Joan, and against the sudden attacks of Joan de Belleville, the widow of Oliver de Clisson. This women's war was neither the least skilful nor the least sanguinary. Edward III. was still before Calais.

The town was reduced to the last extremity. Twice already had the non-combatants been expelled. Sheltered on the first occasion by King Edward, these unhappy wretches, driven out of the famine-stricken town, were dying of hunger and misery between the two camps. John of Vienne, a valiant knight in command at Calais, had sent information to King Philip of the desperate situation in which he was placed. "Remember, sire, that there remains nothing uneaten in the town; not a dog, a cat, or a horse; so that of provisions we can find none in the place—unless we eat the flesh of our people." Philip of Valois unfurled the oriflamme, and summoned his knights round it, to march to the deliverance of his good town of Calais.

The rejoicing was general inside the town; the banners of the French army were visible flying in the air, and their white tents glistened in the sun on the Mount of Sangatte. The citizens already thought that their deliverance had been effected. But the King of England had taken his precautions; the road along the downs was protected by English vessels, well furnished with archers. The road across the marshes was defended by the

Earl of Derby, who was stationed on the bridge of Nieulay, which the king had fortified with towers. The quartermasters of the French army, after having examined the ground, informed the king that it was impossible to cross it. "Thereupon King Philip sent emissaries to the King of England, to pray and require him to choose with them a spot whereon one might fight, and thither to come and confront the King of France." . . .

Edward had formerly challenged King Philip, who had declined to encounter him; it was now his turn: "My lord," he said to the emissary from the French camp, "I duly heard that which you demand of me on the part of my adversary who wrongfully holds my just inheritance, to my injury. Therefore tell him that I have been here during more than a year, that this was well known to him, and that he might have come sooner had he pleased. I have spent heavily of my substance, and I expect very shortly to be master of the town of Calais. Therefore I am not in a mind to obey his bidding and his convenience, nor to let go what I have conquered, what I have so ardently desired and so dearly paid for. If his men cannot pass that way, let them go round to seek a path."

This message was reported to the King of France, "who was incensed thereat" says Froissart, but who made no effort, and again took the road towards Amiens; the banners disappeared from the Mount Sangatte; the tents were struck, and inside the town despair succeeded to the hope which had for awhile sustained the brave citizens. John de Vienne ascended the walls of the town and made a sign that he wished to hold a parley. Sir Walter de Manny immediately approached him. "Good sir," said the brave governor, "you see that our succour has failed. Beg your king to have mercy upon us, and to let us walk out as we are; he will find in the town and the castle enough of goods."

Sir Walter de Manny knew of the anger which the king his master had against the inhabitants of Calais. He shook his head: "Sir John, Sir John," he said, "the king our master will not let you go as you have said; it is his intention that you

shall all submit to his will." "Never," said John de Vienne. And he retired within the town, while the English knights were proceeding to carry the news of what had passed to the king. "You might well be wrong, sire," said Walter de Manny, "for you set us a bad example. If you should wish to send us to your fortresses, we should not go so willingly, if you cause these people to be put to death; for thus should we be served under similar circumstances." King Edward remained gloomy; all the barons agreed with Sir Walter. At length Edward exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I will not remain alone against you all. Walter, you shall go to those in Calais, and inform the commander that the utmost mercy which they will find in me is, that there shall issue forth from the town of Calais six of the most distinguished citizens bareheaded and barefooted, with halters round their necks, and the keys of the town and the castle in their hands; and with these I will do as I please. I will show mercy to the others."

Sir Walter had borne the king's message to Calais. The consternation was great in the public square, where all the inhabitants were assembled. They wept bitterly; "even Sir John de Vienne conceived such pity for them that he cried most tenderly."

"At length arose the richest citizen of the town, who was called Eustache of Saint-Pierre, and said in presence of all, 'Gentlemen, great pity and great wrong would it be to leave so great a number of persons as are here to perish, by famine or otherwise, when some other means can here be found; and I have such great hope of receiving grace and forgiveness through our Lord, if I die to save these people, that I wish to be the first, and will willingly place myself in my shirt bareheaded, barefooted, and with a halter round my neck, at the mercy of the King of England.' And when Eustache had uttered these words, several men and women threw themselves at his feet, weeping tenderly, and it was greatly affecting to be there and to hear, listen to, and look at them."

The example of devotion is contagious. John d'Aire, "a

worthy citizen, who had two beautiful damsels for daughters, declared that he would accompany his fellow-citizen, Eustache." James and Peter de Vissant did likewise, then two others, and the six citizens, in their shirts and barefooted, with a rope round their necks, the keys of the town in their hands, issued forth from Calais, conducted by Sir John de Vienne, upon his little horse, for he was too unwell to walk. Amidst the cries and tears of the population he consigned the condemned men to Walter de Manny. "I beg you, gentle sir," he said, "to intercede for them with the King of England, that these poor men may not be put to death." The worthy knight was anxious to do so, but he advanced without speaking. They arrived before the King of England.

Edward was in the road outside his residence; all his knights surrounded him. Queen Philippa was by his side. "When he saw the citizens he remained very still and looked very cruelly at them, for he hated those of Calais for the great damage and checks which they had caused to his ships in bygone times." The unhappy men had fallen on their knees, offering to the king the keys of the town, and begging for mercy. All the barons were in tears, "being unable to restrain themselves for pity;" but the king eyed them angrily, for he was so hard-hearted and smitten with such great anger that he was unable to speak. At length he broke the silence, and ordered that they should presently be beheaded. All the knights were weeping and supplicating: Sir Walter de Manny, who was entitled to speak, reproached the king for his severity; but Edward gnashed his teeth and said, "Sir Walter, hold your peace! It shall not be otherwise. Let the headsman come forward."

Queen Philippa had thrown herself on her knees "crying so tenderly with compassion that she could not support herself. "Ah! gentle sire," she said, "since I crossed the sea in great peril, I have asked nothing of you; if to-day I beg of you as a gift for the Son of the Holy Virgin and the love of me, that you will have mercy on these six men." The king waited a short time before speaking; he eyed the good lady his wife. "Ah!

lady," he said; "I should be but too pleased were you elsewhere but here. You beg so earnestly that I dare not refuse you, and, although I do so with difficulty, take them, I give them to you; do with them as you please." Then the queen rose, saying, "My lord, many thanks!" And she took with her the six citizens, and caused them to be clothed and fed at their ease; she then sent them away from the army in safety." They went and established themselves in different towns in Picardy, while Edward took possession of Calais, on the 3rd of August, 1347. Queen Philippa was quartered in the house of John d'Aire, which the king had given to her, "and there was such merrymaking as was marvellous, except among the poor inhabitants of Calais, who wept secretly in their dwellings. The king had resolved to establish an English population at Calais, and the former possessors were about to quit for ever that town, which they had so valiantly defended.

Calais had fallen, and King Edward's vengeance was appeased. The legates of the Pope had recommenced their work of conciliation. A truce was concluded, for a few months at first, and afterwards prolonged from time to time for six years. The finances of France were exhausted; the English Parliament refused the subsidies, and the Black Plague, come from the East, was ravaging Europe. France and England, already weakened by war, saw their populations decimated by the pestilence. It was in vain that the Flagellants overran the towns and villages, lacerating themselves with whips, to appease the anger of God; it was in vain that the Jews, accused of poisoning the fountains, were slaughtered; the cemeteries of London could not contain the dead, so that Sir Walter de Manny made a present to the City of a new site. King Edward issued an edict, to compel all able-bodied men to accept work; the fields remained uncultivated, and famine threatened the districts ravaged by the plague. Notwithstanding the amnesty, fighting was still carried on in Guienne, in Brittany, and as far as Calais. The governor, Aymeric of Pavia, had promised to surrender the town to the French for a large sum. Was it an act of treachery, and did

he himself cause King Edward to be informed of the bargain which he had concluded? This may be supposed, since he escaped the anger of his master; but the King of England crossed the Channel very secretly, and arrived at Calais at the moment when Geoffrey de Chargny was approaching to enter the town. The knights proceeded towards the gates. Edward had put aside all his insignia of royalty and fought under the standard of Walter de Manny. Twice he staggered under the blows of Eustace of Ribaumont; but, having at length triumphed over the brave Picard, at the moment when the French were retreating in disorder, he led him into the castle, Ribaumont not knowing the name of his conqueror. At supper, Edward rose, and taking the pearl necklace which he wore on his hood, he placed it upon that of Sir Eustace. "Sir Eustace," said he, "I give you this chaplet, as the best combatant of the day, of those within and without the town, and I beg that you will wear it this year, for love of me, saying everywhere that I gave it to you. I release you from your prison, and you can depart to-morrow, if you please." "And Sir Eustace of Ribaumont was much rejoiced." Aymeric of Pavia had less reason to congratulate himself upon the success of the day. Geoffrey de Chargny surprised him in the castle wherein he had taken refuge, and put him to death as a traitor.

Another occasion caused graver danger to the life of King Edward. The Spanish pirates of the Bay of Biscay were desolating the coast of Flanders and hampering the commerce with England. King Edward resolved to punish their insolence, and, on the 20th of August, 1350, after having cruised about during three days between Dover and Calais, announcement was made of the approach of the vessels led by Don Carlos de La Cerda, the chief of the association of pirates. The engagement began with great fury on both sides. The king had directed his vessel against a large Spanish ship; several leaks had been opened by the shock, and the English vessel was about to founder, when the sailors, making a desperate effort, boarded and

seized the enemy's ship, and took refuge upon their conquest. The Prince of Wales, in a similar peril, had been saved by the Earl of Derby. After the victory, which had been dearly bought, King Edward proceeded to rejoin the queen at Winchelsea. Her servants had already brought her tidings of the battle, which they had anxiously watched from the heights. A truce of twenty years was concluded between the King of England and the seaport towns of Castile.

The armistice, traversed by so many different combats and perils, was about to expire. Philip of Valois had died in 1350, and his son, John the Good, had at first appeared disposed to accept the proposals for peace of the King of England. At a conference which had taken place at Guines, Edward had offered to relinquish his pretensions upon the kingdom of France, provided that he might obtain absolute possession of the provinces which he held as vassal, in his own name or in that of the queen; but the French barons would not agree to this dismemberment of the territory. The king was young, ardent, and fond of glory: he did not resist their entreaties. The proposals of the King of England were rejected. He complained loudly of the bad faith of his adversaries, and obtained money of the Parliament to prepare for the renewal of the hostilities. An expedition of the Prince of Wales in Guienne and an incursion of King Edward into the north of France, had not achieved great success. The king was soon recalled to England by an attack of the Scots upon Berwick. The unhappy town, buffeted about from master to master by bloody sieges, had recently been retaken by Edward, who penetrated further into Scotland, and ravaged the whole country. According to the doctrine of the period, that a people could be sold or bought, Edward had paid Baliol for his rights to the throne of Scotland, a pension of two thousand marks of silver, and once more claimed to enslave the Scotch. The want of provisions in a devastated country compelled him to retire. For a long time the memory of this expedition served to animate the ardour of the Scots during their invasions into England. "Remember burnt Candlemas," they would cry to

each other. It was the title which had been given to that series of pillages and conflagrations.

Edward had not yet quitted England, and had not even been able to send reinforcements to the Black Prince, as the Prince of Wales was called, by reason of the colour of his arms, when the latter took to the field, towards the end of June, 1356, with the object of ravaging the French provinces. An expedition of this kind, effected in the preceding year, had brought him a great deal of booty. He had overrun Agénois, Limousin, Auvergne, and had arrived as far as Berry. Repulsed before Bourges and Issondun, he had taken Vierzon, burnt down Romorantin, and was beginning to fall back in the direction of Guienne with the fruits of his pillage, when King John quitting Chartres, advanced towards Poictiers. The devastation caused by the Black Prince had exasperated the country populations. Nobody warned him of the danger to which he was about to expose himself, when, in his turn, he took the road to Poictiers with his little army. Suddenly, on the 17th of September, 1356, the English advanced guard found itself immediately in the rear of the French forces; the couriers saw the country covered with troops; the retreat towards Guienne was cut off. "May God interpose," said the Prince, seized with great anxiety; "we must have advice and counsel how we shall fight them with advantage." And at the same time the King of France was saying in his army, "Truly, gentlemen, when you are at Paris, at Chartres, at Rouen, or at Orleans, you threaten the English and you wish to stand before them ready for the fray. Now are you there, I show them to you; here you must show your displeasure, for, without mishap, we shall fight them." And those who had heard him answered: "May God decide, all this will we willingly see."

It was on the 18th of September, in the morning. All the flower of the French chivalry thronged around the king and his four sons. It is affirmed that the French army numbered more than fifty thousand men. The forces of the Black Prince did not amount to twelve thousand; but the English had prudently

intrenched themselves behind some hedges and underwood in the midst of the vines; they could only be approached by a narrow road, lined with archers. At the moment when, by the advice of Eustace of Ribaumont, the French knights, prepared to alight to make an attack, the Cardinal of Périgord arrived, begging the king to permit him to negotiate between the two armies. "The English are but a handful compared with you; if you can capture them, and cause them to place themselves at your mercy without giving battle, this manner would be more honourable and profitable to you." The king consented thereto, and the cardinal promptly galloped towards the English army. "Gallant son," he said to the Black Prince, "if you had justly considered the power of the King of France, you would suffer me to arrange terms with him for you, if I could." Therefore the Prince, who was then a young man, answered, "My lord, saving my honour and that of my men, I am ready to listen to anything in reason." Thus the cardinal galloped throughout the day between the two armies. But no agreement could be made, for the English willingly consented to surrender to King John all the towns and castles taken on their way, to conclude a truce of seven years, and to release the prisoners; but the French demanded that the Prince of Wales and a hundred of his knights should surrender before allowing the remainder of the army to pass, "to which the English could not listen; and on Monday morning the French angrily told the cardinal to return to Poictiers, or wherever he pleased, and never more to speak of treaty or agreement, for that he might give offence. Quickly going away, the cardinal proceeded to the English army. "My gallant son," he said to the Prince, "do as you are able, you must fight, for I cannot discover any disposition for concord or peace in the King of France." And the Prince answered, greatly irritated, "That is the intention of us and ours, and may God help the right."

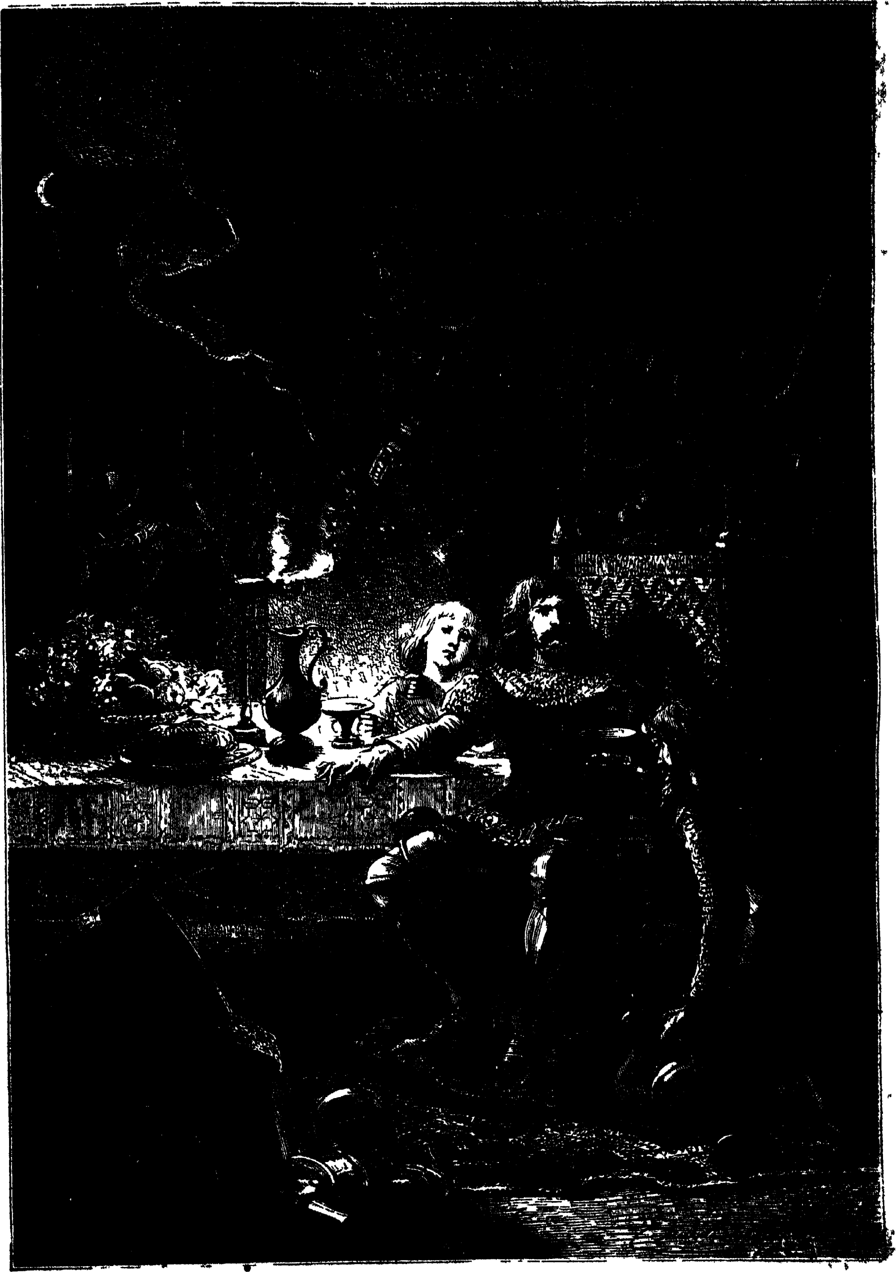
The French army was divided into three great battle-corps: the first was commanded by the marshals of France; the second by Charles, duke of Normandy; King John was at the head of

the third, and he had retained by his side his youngest son, Philip.

The Prince of Wales had placed his little army with great care; it was imperative to fight or perish, for there were no provisions. "My gallant lords," said the young man, "if we are few against the might of our enemies, let us not be daunted, for virtue and victory do not belong to great numbers, but to whomsoever God chooses to send them. If it happen that the day be ours, we shall be the most honoured in the world; if we should die, I have still my father and two gallant brothers, and you good friends, who will avenge us. Thus I beg that you may to-day know how to fight well, for, if it please God and St. George, you will see in me a good knight."

The French had wavered; a great number had remained on horseback, against the advice of Ribaumont. A good English knight, Sir James Audley, awaited them foremost in advance, having vowed to be the best combatant in the battle. The heavy cavalry and the warriors, covered with steel, entered the narrow path leading to their enemies. The arrows of the English archers began to whistle by; the brave knights looked around them: they saw no assailants, but they were wounded and their horses were falling. They were obliged to retreat, leaving the dead, the dying, and the wounded horses, who encumbered the defile. The army corps of the marshals was disconcerted, and that of the Duke of Normandy was beginning to take alarm. The experienced eye of Sir John Chandos was not deceived in the matter. "Ride forward, sire," he said to the Prince of Wales, "for the day is yours. Let us devote ourselves to your adversary, the King of France; for there lies the greater part of the day's work, and I well know that by reason of his valour he will not fly." The prince applied his spurs to his horse, and, quitting his rustic rampart, he advanced into the open space where the King of France was fighting. A detachment of the archers attacked at the same time the troops of the Duke of Normandy, who took to flight almost without striking a blow. The English charged, "St. George and Guienne!"—

"Montjoie St. Denis!" was the answer around King John; but the disorder was increasing. The Duke of Orleans had disappeared with the reserve forces. "The king was not a man ever to be frightened by the things which he saw or heard said, but still remained a good knight, and fought well." "Dismount! dismount!" he cried to all his followers; and himself alighting from his horse, he marched along their ranks, battle-axe in hand, and there, around him "there was a great number of warriors, haughty and cruel, and many heavy blows were given and received." And the still youthful prince, Philip, was there crying to his father: "Sire, have a care on your right! Sire, have a care on your left!" and defended him as much as he was able. Meanwhile, on all sides the king was greeted with, "Surrender, or you are a dead man." He looked around him. "To whom shall I surrender?" he asked aloud. "Where is my cousin, the Prince of Wales? If I could see him I would speak." "Sire," said a knight, "he is not here; but surrender to me, I will conduct you to him." "Who are you?" asked the king. "Denis de Morbecque, a knight of Artois; but I serve the King of England, because I cannot live in the kingdom of France, and because I have there forfeited all my possessions." The king tendered his glove to him. "I surrender to you," he said. The knight endeavoured to lead the king away from the crowd; but although he was tall and powerful, everybody crowded round him, saying, "I have captured him; I have captured him," and the king could not advance, nor could his youngest son, Philip. The Earl of Warwick and Sir Reynold Cobham, who were seeking the king on behalf of the Prince of Wales, were obliged to deliver him from his enemies, and to conduct him courteously to the spot where Chandos had advised that the banner of England should be planted to reassemble the troops. "It is time that your men should rejoin you," he had said, "for they are scattered and the day is yours. You must refresh yourself a little, for I see that you are much heated." And the prince had removed his helmet when the King of France was brought forward, before whom he made a profound



IN THE EVENING HE WAITED UPON HIM.

reverence and received him as a king, well and wisely. And in the evening he waited upon him without ever consenting to be seated, notwithstanding any solicitation which the king made in this respect, and said that he was not yet sufficiently important to sit down at the table of so great a sovereign and so valiant a man, who had that day surpassed the ablest. And all deemed that the Prince had spoken well."

The towns and castles remained closed in Poitou and in Saintonge, but the French army was not rallied, and no attempt was made to deliver the king. The Prince of Wales hastened to Bordeaux, in order to place in safety his illustrious prisoners, and all the booty with which his army was loaded. The Duke of Normandy had been created Regent by the States-general, and the Black Prince concluded a truce of two years with him. He spent the winter in Gascony; then in the spring (April, 1357) he set sail to conduct to England King John and his son Philip. Negotiations were in progress for the ransom of the king, and the legates of the Pope, the ordinary negotiators of the great treaties between sovereigns, followed the Prince of Wales and his prisoners to England. John entered London, on the 24th of April, upon a magnificent courser, richly caparisoned; the Prince of Wales was at his side upon a small black horse. King Edward had come forward to meet his illustrious captive, and all the court hastened to do him honour. King John consoled himself easily enough in his captivity.

Already for six years past Edward had been in treaty with the Scottish Parliament for the ransom of King David Bruce. Twice the latter had been enabled to visit his kingdom, in order to induce his subjects to redeem him; but Scotland was poor, and the demands of Edward were exorbitant. It was not until the month of October, 1357, that the treaty was at length concluded, and that David was enabled to return to his kingdom after an imprisonment of eleven years. But his subjects soon perceived the influence which his long sojourn in England had exercised over their weak sovereign; when Queen Jane died, without issue, in 1362, David proposed to the Scottish Parlia-

ment to select as his heir, Lionel, the third son of the King of England, to the exclusion of his nephew, the Stewart[1] of Scotland. The indignation of the Scottish Parliament did not put an end to the project. Some delay in the payment of the ransom furnished an excuse to King Edward, and, until the death of King David, in 1371, the intrigues of the English continued to agitate Scotland. His nephew succeeded him, without opposition, and assumed the title of Robert II.

While Scottish affairs were occupying Edward III., the treaty with France still remained pending. The conditions required by the English were so harsh, that King John, although a prisoner, hesitated to accept them. Besides an enormous sum for the ransom of the king, Edward claimed to retain all his conquests in France, and to secure all the possessions formerly belonging to his family, not as an appanage or fief, but as a property. While the negotiations were being prolonged, the condition of France became daily more critical. The evil genius of the royal family, Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, had escaped from the prison where, for a long time, he had been confined. He had allied himself to the citizens of Paris, who wished to exert a certain amount of influence in their affairs, a power which was contested by the Dauphin[2] and his council. The population of Paris, incited by their chiefs, soon escaped from the authority of the latter, who found themselves drawn along irresistibly with the current. Riot succeeded riot; two of the advisers of the Dauphin were slain under his eyes, on the 22nd of February, 1358, and his chancellor was compelled to fly. The contagion spread throughout the whole of France; as Paris had had its Maillotins (workmen armed with mallets), France in general had its Jacquerie, an insurrection of the serfs, who were ironically called *Jacques Bonhomme*. Everywhere fearful massacres took place, and the Dauphin, compelled to arm

[1] *Stewart*, seneschal, an hereditary title, which subsequently became the family name of the Stuarts.

[2] The eldest son of the King of France had recently assumed the title of Dauphin, in consequence of the cession of Dauphiné to France by Humbert II., the last Dauphin of the Viennois.

against the peasants of his kingdom, had no leisure to think of the demands of King Edward. The insurrection was scarcely at an end, when King John accepted the proposals of the King of England; but as soon as the conditions of the treaty were known in France, the States-general rejected them with indignation. The dismemberment of the country was impossible; peace and the liberty of the king were too dearly bought at this price.

King Edward knew the proud obstinacy of the English Parliament; he was indignant, however, to find a similar resistance from the French States-general, and complaining of perfidy he entered France on the 28th of October, 1359. He had traversed Picardy, Artois, and Cambrésis, consigning everything to fire and sword, when he arrived before Rheims, where he proposed to be crowned King of France. In vain did he besiege that town during seven weeks. The archbishop and the citizens did not suffer themselves to be intimidated by the fate of Calais, and defended the place so valiantly that Edward was compelled to retire. He entered into Burgundy, but the Duke Philip purchased his withdrawal with a large sum of money and a promise of neutrality. The King of England took the road to Paris. His army had suffered greatly during the winter; the month of March had been rough, and the negotiations which had been opened during the festival of Easter not having brought about any result, Edward was compelled to retire. The Dauphin had not responded to his challenge; and the English army, unfit to attack the capital, fell back towards Brittany, after having burnt down the suburbs of Paris. The road was strewn with the bodies of the men and horses succumbing to fatigue and misery. At length, in the neighbourhood of Chartres, a fearful storm surprised the English in the open plain. The son of the Earl of Warwick was killed by a thunderbolt beside the king. Struck by this terrible warning, Edward leapt from his horse, and vowed to God and Our Lady of Chartres no longer to reject the proposals for peace, provided that they should be consistent with his honour; and conferences were opened a few days afterwards, at Brétigny, a small village where Edward had halted.

Peace was at length concluded on the 8th of May, 1360. The King of England renounced his pretensions to the kingdom of France, and restored all his conquests, with the exception of Calais and Guines. King John conceded to him absolutely, for himself and his heirs in perpetuity, Guienne, Poitou, Saintonge, Agénois, Limousin, Périgord, and the county of Ponthieu. A ransom of three millions of golden crowns was to be paid within six years for the release of the king; twenty-five French barons, forty-two burgesses, and sixteen of the most important prisoners captured at Poictiers, were to serve as hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty.

These conditions, harsh as they yet remained, were so much better than the first proposals of King Edward, that after much intriguing and hesitation, they were at length solemnly ratified by the two sovereigns at Calais, on the 24th of October, 1360, with this strange clause, that the definitive renunciations by the monarchs, of the possessions which they ceded, should not take place until the festival of the Assumption of the following year. On the morrow, the 25th of October, King John was restored to liberty, and King Edward embarked for England.

The festival of the Assumption had passed by, as well as many other holidays, but the conditions of the treaty of Brétigny were not yet fulfilled: the financial distress of France had not admitted of raising the sums promised for the ransom. The land was ravaged by the free bands, formerly in the pay of the belligerents, and who, having no employment since the peace, had lived by plunder and rapine. They proceeded from province to province, wherever there still remained any resources; and they had defeated John of Bourbon, who had been despatched against them by the Dauphin. The States-general murmured at the conditions of the treaty, King John saw nothing in his kingdom but oppression and misery; he could not fulfil his engagements, and, as a crowning disgrace, one of his hostages, his own son, the Duke of Anjou, having been brought to Calais with the other *knights of the Lily*—a designation applied to his brother, the Duke of Berry, his uncle, the Duke of Orleans, and his

cousin, the Duke of Bourbon—shamelessly broke his word, by flying from prison to repair to Paris. King John was weary of the struggle and wounded in his pride and his loyalty; perchance also he remembered the rejoicings which had been instituted in his honour in London; he announced that he was about to return to England. "Were honour banished from the whole earth," he proudly said, "it should be found again in the heart of a king." He arrived in London at the beginning of the year 1364; but before being able to resume the negotiations, he fell ill, and died on the 8th of April. His body was brought back to France, with all royal magnificence, and the Dauphin became king under the title of Charles V.

While the perplexities of the government in France had hindered the consolidation of peace, the Prince of Wales had been married, on the 10th of October, 1361, to the woman whom he had loved all his lifetime, his cousin Joan, daughter of Edmund, earl of Kent. She had already been twice married, and her second husband, Lord Holland, had recently died. Happy at length, the Black Prince established himself in Aquitaine with his wife, and held at Bordeaux a magnificent court, the school for all good chivalry, while he laboured to restore order in these provinces, so long desolated by war.

King Charles V. had found a means of ridding himself of the free companies. The King of Castile, Peter IV., had deserved his surname of "the Cruel" for a series of crimes which had exasperated his people. His brother, Henry of Transtamare, exiled by him, and burning with a desire to avenge his mother and all his relatives assassinated by the tyrant, had taken refuge in France, asking the assistance of King Charles V. The latter offered the services of the free companies; the good knight Bertrand du Guesclin, already famous among the most illustrious warriors of his time, concluded a treaty with the chiefs of the different bands, and, placing himself at their head, crossed the Pyrenees under the orders of Henry of Transtamare, who was soon placed upon the throne of Castile, almost without striking a blow. In vain did Peter the Cruel call to his aid all

his vassals; they were too happy to see themselves delivered from his yoke, and the tyrant was compelled to take to flight; he took refuge at Bordeaux, begging the assistance of the Prince of Wales.

Passion blinds the most clear-sighted men: the noble character of the Black Prince had nothing in common with the savage ferocity and calculating perfidy of Peter the Cruel; but the prince thought this king ill-used by his brother and his subjects. France had embraced the cause of Henry of Transtamare, and England thought herself constrained to support his rival. He had brought with him his two daughters, who remained at the court of Bordeaux, where they were married, a few years later, to two sons of King Edward, the Duke of Lancaster and the Earl of Cambridge. The first rumour of the intentions of the Black Prince caused a secession from the army of Du Guesclin of some of his best bands. Sir John Calverley and Sir Robert Knowles, with twelve thousand men, immediately abandoned Henry of Transtamare and proceeded into Guienne, assembled under the banner of their legitimate chief. The King of Navarre delivered up the passage through the Pyrenees, and in the month of February, 1367, in spite of cold, snow, and the scarcity of provisions in a poor country, thirty thousand men crossed the defiles of the mountains under the command of the Prince of Wales and Peter the Cruel, and on the 3rd of April a battle was fought between the two pretenders upon the plain of Navarette. The combat was fierce. A portion of the Spaniards had given way; but Henry of Transtamare, supported by Du Guesclin, resolutely defended himself. At length the latter was made a prisoner, and the rout was complete. Don Henry fled and took refuge in Arragon. Six thousand men remained upon the field of battle, and two thousand prisoners were in the hands of Peter the Cruel. He was preparing to slaughter them when the Prince of Wales demanded mercy for them, and the king did not dare to refuse it; but he had no intention of fulfilling the promises which he had made at Bordeaux. From his camp at Valladolid, the prince repeatedly sent to Peter the

Cruel, demanding the money which he had undertaken to pay for the expenses of the war; no answer, no visit from the king, no provisions; while the English army was decimated by sickness, by the climate, and by want. The prince himself was suffering from a fever; weary of waiting, and convinced of the perfidy of his ally, he raised his camp on the 26th of June, and returned to Guienne. Peter the Cruel had momentarily regained his throne, but the treasury of England was empty; the health of the Black Prince was for ever destroyed, his character embittered by suffering and deceptions. The barons of Aquitaine began to murmur and to turn unwillingly towards France.

Charles V. deserved his title of the "Wise;" prudent and foreseeing, but too weak in body to have any taste for warfare, he directed the affairs of the kingdom from his seat, with a firm moderation to which the French, like their enemies, had not been accustomed under his predecessors. When the Poitevins presented themselves before Charles V., as the liege lord, to complain of the excessive taxes imposed by the Black Prince, he temporised, gave vague answers, and retained the complainants at Paris, while his brother, the Duke of Anjou, governor of Languedoc, was fostering the discontent in the provinces of the south belonging to the English.

The Spanish ally of the Black Prince had recently received the reward of all his crimes; scarcely had the English retired, when Don Henry had again taken the field, and for the second time he had dethroned his brother. As he was besieging him in a fortified castle, they had met in the tent of a French knight; Peter immediately seized his brother by the throat, and threw him to the ground. Henry drew his dagger, and, Peter, stabbed to the heart, died immediately. An offensive and defensive alliance had recently been concluded between France and Spain (20th of November, 1368), and King Charles V., publicly taking his course, summoned Edward, Prince of Acquitaine, to appear at Paris before his peers, there to answer the complaints of his vassals.

Since the treaty of Brétigny, King Edward and his son had

no longer recognized the superiority of France. "I will go," said the Black Prince, "but with sixty thousand lances." His father was better aware of the difficulty of the undertaking; he made moderate proposals to Charles V., simply claiming the sovereignty of Aquitaine; but Charles V., seeing the English Parliament wearied by the wars, King Edward aged and tired, and the Black Prince ill, maintained his pretension, and the French troops entered into Poitou, Guienne, and Limousin. The discontented and capricious inhabitants almost always lent their support to the French. King Edward sent his second son, the Duke of Lancaster, with considerable reinforcements, to the assistance of the Black Prince; but, while he was overrunning the Northern provinces, King Charles not permitting any important engagement to take place, the conquests of the French extended in the South, and the Prince of Wales, dangerously ill, found himself compelled to take the field upon a litter. The Dukes of Anjou and Berry did not await him. They had left garrisons in the towns, and had retired when the prince advanced against Limoges. He had formerly lavished his favours upon that town which had been surrendered to the French by the bishop, and he had sworn, by the soul of his father, not to move from thence nor do anything else until he should have recaptured it. The siege progressed slowly, the citizens bravely supported the garrison, for they feared the vengeance of the prince. The latter conducted the military operations with a savage fury which he had never before manifested. At length, at the end of a month, a large mine opened a breach in the walls of the town; the besiegers sprang inside, and the massacre began; women, children, and old men fell upon their knees crying, "Mercy! such poor folks could not have been concerned in surrendering the town," but none received quarter. The knights and men at arms of the garrison still defended themselves heroically in the streets; three of them planted themselves against a wall, and made such good use of their swords that the Prince of Wales, while passing by in his litter, was struck with admiration, and received them as

prisoners to be ransomed. The humble people were all dead, "who were really martyrs," says Froissart; the town was fired, and the Prince of Wales had retired. He had exhausted his strength, and, in the hope of regaining his health under his native sky, he set out for England, leaving to his brother John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, the care of prosecuting the war. The military career of the Black Prince was ended; six years of illness and languor were to bring to its close this life so brilliantly begun, but unhappily sullied by a last act of cruelty, more consistent with the general morals of the time than with the character hitherto displayed by the son of King Edward.

The Duke of Lancaster had recently married Constance, the eldest daughter of Peter the Cruel, and, upon this ground, he aspired to the crown of Castile, an imprudent pretension which strengthened the union of the king, Don Henry, with France. The Earl of Pembroke was bringing reinforcements to the duke in June 1372, when a Spanish fleet stationed between La Rochelle and the Isle of Ré, barred the passage. An engagement took place and the English were completely beaten, their vessels being either captured or scuttled. This disaster was an unmistakeable blow to King Edward and to the English nation, which was beginning to look upon the sea as its legitimate empire. The successes of King Charles V. were increasing; he had placed Bertrand du Guesclin at the head of his armies, and had made him Constable of France; but the remembrance of Crécy and Poictiers was always before his eyes; he did not permit any pitched battles to be fought. From siege to siege, from skirmish to skirmish, Du Guesclin was still marching forward, sometimes surprising the enemy, passing through their ranks, as it is said in his Memoirs, by a *stratagem*, which consisted in striking with the point and with the edge of the sword; but when the English presented themselves in a body, the constable would fall back upon the fortresses, and allow a passage to the enemy, who overran the country and could not surround either the large towns or fortified castles. "Never has king fought so little, and given so much trouble," said

Edward angrily, for his French possessions were diminishing day by day. Bordeaux and Bayonne, with a narrow piece of territory, alone remained in his hands in the south, and Calais in the north; and, if the faithful ally of England, the young Count of Montfort, was everywhere recognized in Brittany, since the death of Charles of Blois, in 1364, his authority was too well contested by Oliver de Clisson to allow of his supporting English interests beyond his duchy. John of Gaunt returned to England, and once more, the legates of the Pope playing the part of peacemakers, a truce of one year was concluded at Bruges in 1374, to be prolonged almost until the death of King Edward.

So many reverses, after so much glory, had undermined in England the popularity of the king. The finances of the country were in default; every resource had been exhausted to support a war which had borne so little fruits. Complaints, which people did not dare to address to the king, reached his ministers, and even his son, the Duke of Lancaster, who had gradually secured the power, in consequence of the weakness of his father and the illness of the Prince of Wales. The latter remained the idol of the nation, and, either through jealousy of his brother, or through dissatisfaction at the state of affairs, he lent his support to the opposition. The Parliament of 1376, long known under the title of "The Good Parliament," addressed to the king a remonstrance concerning the waste of the public money, and demanded the dismissal of several of the ministers. Lord Latimer and Lord Nevil were deprived of all their offices; but the object of the public hatred and mistrust was especially a woman, named Alice Perrers, formerly a lady of the bedchamber to Queen Philippa, and who, since the death of the latter, had acquired such an influence over King Edward, that he had presented her with the jewels of his wife, and frequently permitted her to dispense at her pleasure the favours of the crown. The commons publicly demanded that she should be banished from the kingdom.

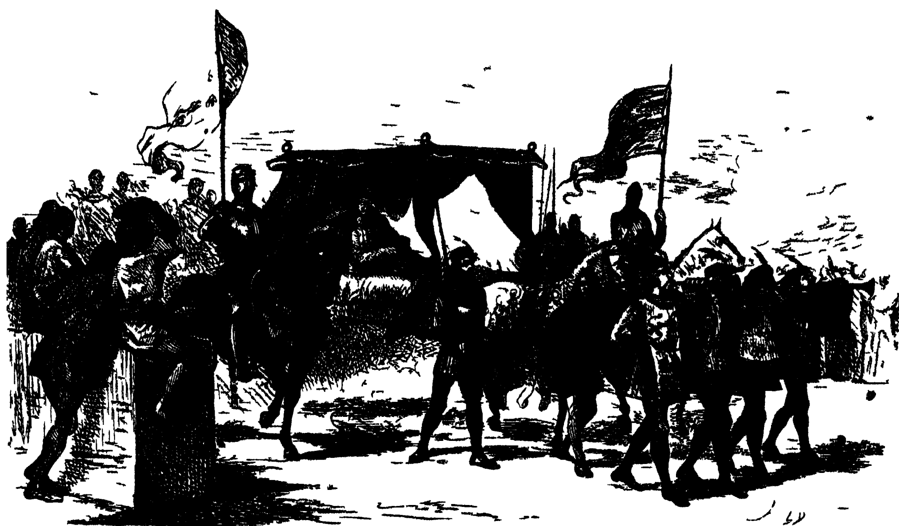
Amidst this work of reform, the Parliament suddenly lost its

firmest support. The Black Prince died on the 8th of June, 1376. For a long time he had been ailing, and unable to assume in the government of his country the position which by right belonged to him; but the nation had always reckoned upon his wisdom and justice no less than on his brilliant valour; a prosperous and happy reign had been hoped for, and the grief was general and protracted. "The good fortune of England seemed bound up in his person," says the chronicler Walsingham; "it had flourished in his health, it languished in his illness, and died at his death; in him expired all the hopes of the English. For during his lifetime neither an invasion of the enemy nor an encounter in battle had been feared." He was interred with great pomp in Canterbury Cathedral, where he had formerly erected a chapel in memory of his marriage. At the especial request of the Parliament, his eldest son Richard was thereupon declared heir to the throne. Fears were entertained concerning the pretensions of the Duke of Lancaster, who had resumed all his authority. Sir Peter de la Mare, who had impeached the ministers in the name of the Parliament, was arrested. The Bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, formerly at the head of the opposition, was divested of his revenues. A Parliament favourable to John of Gaunt was convoked; it proposed the recall of Alice Perrers, the rehabilitation of Lord Latimer, and other measures so unpopular that the palace of the duke was assailed by the citizens of London, and his friend Lord Percy, a Marshal of England, was pursued by the mob, so that the prince was obliged to throw himself into a small boat with Percy, to take refuge at Kennington, in the castle inhabited by the young Prince Richard and his mother. All the remonstrances of the Bishop of London scarcely succeeded in calming the disturbance. The arms of the Duke of Lancaster, at the gate of his palace, were inverted by the people as the escutcheon of a traitor; when the duke returned shortly afterwards to London, all the magistrates of the City were dismissed and replaced by his creatures. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the reign of Edward III., a general

amnesty was proclaimed; the Bishop of Winchester was alone excluded from it.

It was the last public act of King Edward; this body so active and robust, this spirit so bold, this will so firm, had nevertheless undergone the effects of premature old age. The ministers were ranging themselves beside the Duke of Lancaster; the opposition was grouped around the young Prince Richard and the Princess of Wales; the old king was dying alone, with Alice Perrers. It is even said that she deserted him in his agony, after having taken the royal ring from him. The king lay in his isolation; the servants had dispersed in the manor of Shene, to plunder at their leisure. A monk entered, crucifix in hand; he approached the unhappy monarch, praying beside him, and supporting his expiring head until the last sigh. Thus died, on the 21st of June, 1377, the great Edward III., who had at one time appeared destined to unite upon his head the two crowns of France and England; he died alone, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, leaving to his grandson, a child, instead of the whole of Aquitaine, which he had received from his father, a few towns only upon that soil of France of which he claimed possession. The blood of the two nations had flowed during more than thirty years, and the struggle was as yet only at its beginning.





CHAPTER XII.

BOLINGBROKE

RICHARD II. (1377—1398)—HENRY IV. (1398—1413)

THE little King Richard was much fatigued on the 16th of July, 1377, it was found necessary to place him in a litter to bring him back to the palace, after his coronation. All the former popularity of his grandfather Edward III., all the affection which his father the Black Prince had inspired, appeared to have accumulated upon his head, by reason of the fear and aversion which were felt towards John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. The prelates and barons assembled on the morrow of the coronation, and selected a council of regency of twelve members. The uncles of the king did not form part of this body, and John of Gaunt retired to his castle of Kenilworth; but several members of the council remained devoted to him, and his influence soon began to be complained of.

The King of France, Charles V., had lost no time in taking advantage of the weakness of the English government: his fleets overran the Channel, fettering commerce and seizing the

British vessels; a descent was even made upon the Isle of Wight. The Parliament was convoked, and the Earl of Buckingham, the uncle of the king, was placed at the head of the naval forces; his expedition against the French fleet miscarried, and his defeat increased the discontent of the nation. The Parliament was composed chiefly of the enemies of the Duke of Lancaster, and when a kind of reconciliation had been effected between the latter and the House of Commons, that assembly demanded that two citizens of London should be entrusted to receive the money voted for the defence of the country. John of Gaunt started for France with a large army (1378).

The King of Navarre, still at war with Charles V., held a portion of Normandy; he had surrendered Cherbourg to the English. The Duke of Brittany, John de Montfort, being reduced to the last extremity by the successes of Bertrand du Guesclin, had consigned Brest to them; but these acquisitions were due to the free will of the allies of England, and not to its arms. John of Gaunt was defeated before St. Malo; and, being pursued by Du Guesclin, was compelled to return to England, while the Scots, at the instigation of France, invaded the northern counties and took possession of Berwick Castle. A Scottish pirate, named John Mercer, devastated the coast as far as Scarborough. A London merchant, named John Philpot, on the other hand, armed a small fleet, and hastening to the encounter of Mercer, recaptured from him all the vessels which the latter had seized; captured, besides, fifteen Spanish ships, and returned triumphantly into the Thames, amid the plaudits of his fellow-citizens, and to the indignation of the council, which reprimanded the alderman for the boldness of his undertaking.

The Parliament had assembled at Gloucester, disaffected and exacting. The Commons asked to examine the accounts, which was granted to them as a favour. John de Montfort had recently taken refuge in England, banished from his dominions by King Charles V., who committed the imprudent act of officially annexing the duchy of Brittany to France. This declaration immediately rallied all the different factions against him.

John de Montfort was recalled; the States-general of Brittany wrote to the King of France, asking him to authorize them to retain their independent ruler. At the same time an English army, under the command of the Earl of Buckingham, landed at Calais and ravaged the provinces of Artois, Picardy, and Champagne without ever encountering the necessity of a serious combat. The English were arriving in Brittany when King Charles V. died (1378), and the Bretons, reassured by the weakness of the young King Charles VI., began to look coldly upon their English allies. De Montfort negotiated with the French council of regency, and Buckingham was only indebted for his safety to the valour of his troops and to the provisions which he had brought. He retired in the spring of 1379. Great events were in preparation in England.

For some years a double movement, religious and social, had begun secretly to agitate the English people. A priest, John Wycliffe, born towards 1324, in Yorkshire, had attracted attention at the university of Oxford by his rare faculties, and had commenced, in the year 1356, to denounce the abuses of the papal authority; he had then attacked the mendicant monks, accusing the Church in general of greed and corruption. Summoned to appear before the Bishop of London, in the last year of the reign of Edward III., to answer for his opinions, he had been supported by the Duke of Lancaster and his friend Lord Percy; both had even insulted the bishop, which had brought about an insurrection in the city. Wycliffe had retracted some of his ideas, he had explained others; and, thanks to his powerful protectors, he had obtained the living of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, where he spent the remainder of his life, surrounded by priests, whom he brought up in truly apostolic poverty, and who subsequently spread his opinions among the people. Wycliffe is the first of the Reformers, or rather, their precursor. His doctrines acted more powerfully abroad than in his own country; it is to his books that were due the first germs of the Reformation in Bohemia; for England, his greatest work was the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. The most important of his ideas was the appeal to the private judgment of the faith-

ful upon the very text of the Holy Scriptures. Wycliffe had shaken the traditions of submission to the clergy; he had at the same time preached a dangerous doctrine. "All possessions," he said, "come of grace, and may be forfeited by sin." The poor serfs, who possessed nothing, might be anxious to profit in their turn by the grace which insured estates. Wycliffe died peacefully at Lutterworth in 1384.

Already, for two years past, his illustrious friend, Geoffrey Chaucer, the first creator of English poetry, had been compelled to quit England, compromised by his attachment to the new ideas; he had retired into Hainault, where he lived in peace, protected by the friendship of the Duke of Lancaster. The first works of Chaucer, *The Court of Love*, the poem of *Troilus and Cresseide*, *The Temple of Fame*, had been published several years before, and had assured to him a reputation which had largely contributed to his fortune. The English language at this time, still largely intermixed with French, and difficult to understand at the present time, assumed, under the pen of Chaucer, a native grace to which sometimes succeeds an energy which prepared the way for Spenser and Shakespeare. Chaucer again established himself in England when John of Gaunt returned from his expedition to Castile; he lived to an advanced age, and composed in his retreat of Dumington his *Canterbury Tales*, written in the style of the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, and the only one of his books which is still read at the present day. He died in 1400, the year following the accession of Henry Bolingbroke, the son of his protector. Like Wycliffe, he had seen the commencement of the popular agitations. The poll-tax voted by the Parliament in 1379 was their first opportunity.

A general movement towards the enfranchisement of the lower classes manifested itself everywhere in Europe. The insurrection of the Jacquerie in France; the resistance of the Flemish citizens and artisans, first, to the conduct of Jacques van Arteveldt, and afterwards to that of Philip, his son, had testified to the awakening of the serfs, the peasants, and the artisans, so long reduced to the condition of beasts of burden. The kings

had been in need of money, and the taxes weighing upon all their subjects, it had been necessary to conciliate them. The soldiery had acquired a new importance; the English archers, in particular, nearly all peasants by origin, had played an important part in the wars. When the tax-collectors began in 1380 to demand payment of the poll-tax, of a people already impoverished by a long series of exactions, they met with a resistance which increased with the oppression. The tax, at first collected with leniency, was let out to some courtiers; they borrowed in advance of the Lombards and Flemings; repayment became necessary, and the revenue was exacted with great severity. The peasants became exasperated; they began to assemble and confer together; the insurrection broke out in Essex. The "Commons of England," as the insurgents styled themselves, broke into several dwelling-houses in the neighbourhood; they obeyed a seditious priest who assumed the name of Jack Straw. The contagion rapidly spread into the counties of Kent, Suffolk, and Norfolk. The tax was payable only in the case of persons above fourteen years of age. A Kentish collector maintained that the daughter of a tiler had attained the specified age; her mother maintained the contrary; the collector insulted the young girl, and was brained with a hammer by the father. A knight had reclaimed a serf who thought he was entitled to enfranchisement, and had imprisoned him in Rochester Castle; the peasants attacked the castle and compelled the garrison to surrender the prisoner. The Kentish insurgents marched under the command of a chief named Wat Tyler (Wat the tiler). On the Monday of Trinity week, in 1381, they entered Canterbury, threatening death to the archbishop, who was absent. The monks of the chapter-house were compelled to swear fidelity to King Richard and the commons of England. Three wealthy burgesses were beheaded, and the crowd proceeded towards London. It is related that one hundred thousand men followed close upon the steps of Wat Tyler, when he arrived on the 11th of June at Blackheath.

The Princess of Wales, the mother of the young king, was

returning from a pilgrimage. The crowd of insurgents surrounded her retinue. She was popular by reason of her husband's memory and her ransom cost her only some kisses bestowed on the more audacious of the leaders, who had not forgotten that she had formerly been called "the fair maid of Kent;" she passed by without further difficulty. The malcontents thronged round an itinerant preacher whom they had brought with them, and who displayed to them this text, now famous:—

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?"

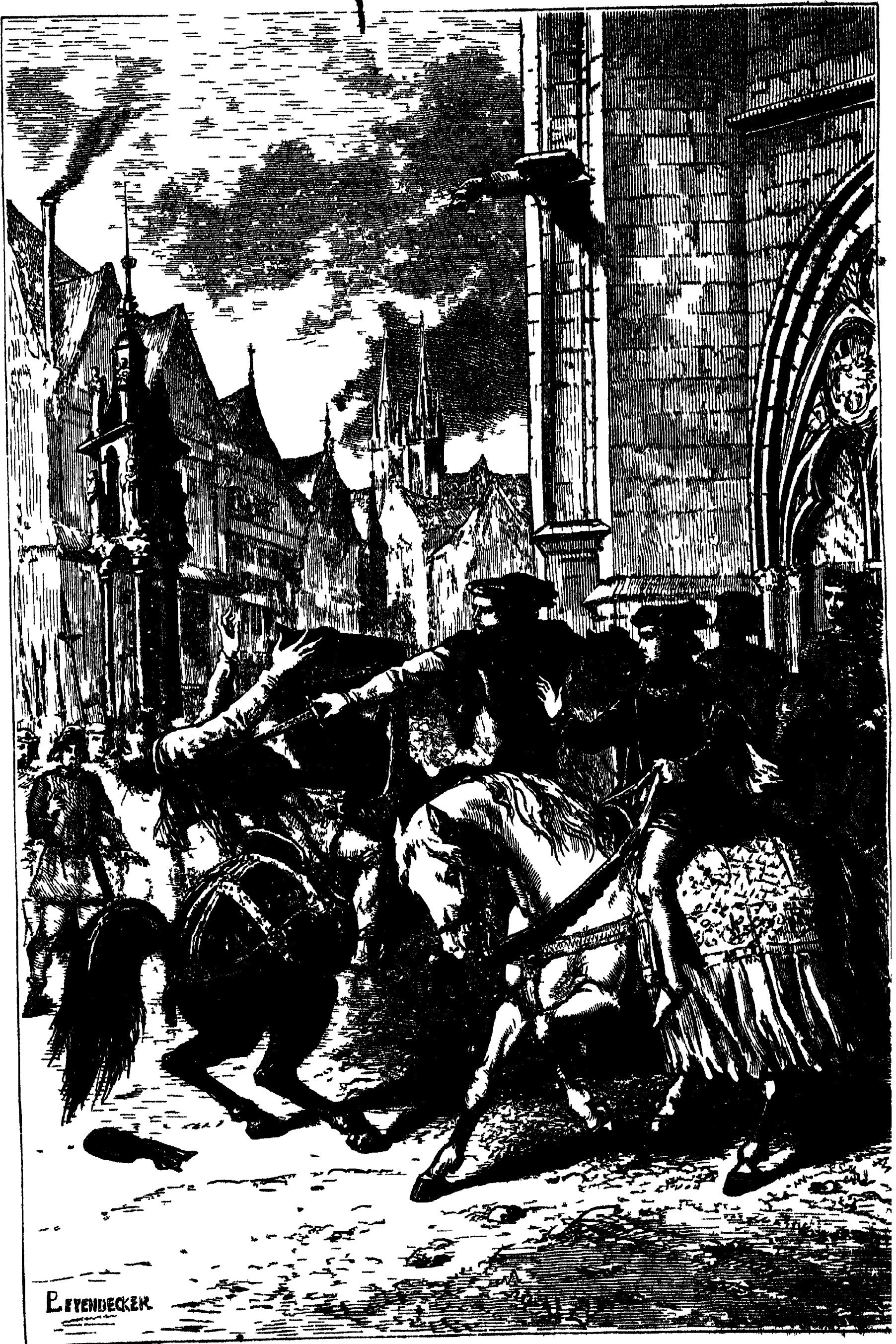
The doctrine of equality was received with enthusiasm by these poor people, hitherto trodden under foot. The outskirts of London were laid waste when the king proceeded down the Thames, on the 12th of June, to receive the petition of the insurgents. Ten thousand men awaited his arrival at Rotherhithe; but at the sight of the royal barge they uttered "such cries," says Froissart, "that one would have thought that all the demons of hell were in their midst." The noblemen who accompanied Richard became alarmed, and dragged him with them as far as the Tower. "The Commons of England," in a state of fury, advanced along the right bank of the river as far as Lambeth, burnt down the prisons, and plundered the palace of the Archbishop. On the other side of the Thames the insurgents marched along the course of the river, and at length obtaining a passage over London Bridge, they joined their brothers of Kent. The whole city was in their power; the population of London had joined them, and the rich citizens, to please them, had thrown open their cellars to them. Hitherto, the multitude had behaved with a certain amount of order, but intoxication being once added to the joy of triumph, they could no longer be restrained; the palace of the Duke of Lancaster was invaded and burnt down; plunder was strictly forbidden; the gold was reduced to powder, and the precious stones were broken. A peasant had taken a bowl of money; he was thrown into the river with his booty. The prisons being opened and destroyed brought fresh reinforcements to the insurgents. The

Temple was burnt, with all the valuable books which had been collected by the knights. The priory of St. John of Jerusalem, recently constructed by Sir Thomas Hales, a prior of the order and Chancellor of the Kingdom, was also delivered up to the flames. A thirst for blood began to take possession of the populace. Every passer-by was challenged. "For whom are you?" was asked. If the answer was not "For King Richard and the true commons," the person answering was immediately slaughtered. All the Flemings fell by the knife or the hatchet; the popular hatred sought them out even in the churches. Wine and blood flowed in the streets; the counsellors of the king resolved to try concessions.

On the morning of the 14th of June a proclamation was spread throughout London, recommending the crowd which surrounded the Tower, and demanded the heads of the chancellor and treasurer, to retreat towards Mile End. The king promised there to come to them and to grant their requests. A portion of the mob obeyed; when Richard arrived with a weak retinue at the meeting-place (his brothers, the Earl of Kent and Lord John Holland, had quitted him on the road), he saw himself surrounded by sixty thousand peasants. Their tone was respectful, and their requests, which then appeared monstrous, do not create the same impression at the present day. They demanded the definitive abolition of servitude; the power to sell and purchase in all markets; and a general amnesty for the past. To this they added a strange claim to fix the amount of rental on lands. The king promised all that they wished, and immediately caused to be made a large number of copies of the charter which he had thus granted. These were distributed among the insurgents; the men of Essex and Hertford retired in a body; but the malcontents of Kent had remained in the capital, and had not appeared at the meeting-place in Mile End. Scarcely had the king retired when these dangerous foes attacked the Tower, beheading the councillors who had taken refuge therein; the Archbishop of Canterbury, the treasurer, Sir Thomas Hales, and several others. The Princess of Wales,

while yet in bed, saw a furious mob spring into her chamber. No injury was done to her, and her attendants were enabled to throw her, fainting with fright, into a little boat; she was conveyed to a house in the city belonging to the king, who there came and joined her when he had learnt the sad news of the massacre at the Tower.

In the morning, Richard issued forth with a small escort, and advanced fearlessly towards Smithfield. The multitude thronged the streets and squares. The king drew up at St. Bartholomew's Priory. "I will go no further," he said, "without having pacified the insurgents." Wat Tyler had perceived him, and urging his horse towards him, "There is the king; I go to speak to him," he cried to his supporters; "do not move a hand or foot unless I give you the signal." The horse of the popular chief touched heads with that of the king. "Sir king," said Wat Tyler, "do you see those men yonder?" "Yes," replied the young prince without stirring. "They are at my disposal, and ready to do as I bid them." And he toyed with his dagger, holding the bridle of the royal courser; then, perceiving behind Richard an esquire who had displeased him, "Ah! you here?" he said, "give me your sword." The esquire refused; Wat Tyler made a motion to take possession of it; the followers of the king were roused. The Lord Mayor of London, William Walworth, urged forward his horse, and, advancing towards the rebel, struck him a blow with a dagger; the horse reared. Tyler endeavoured to return to his followers; an esquire of the king thrust his sword through his body; he fell, beating the air with his hands. The mob became agitated. "Our captain is slain," was the cry, and the bowstrings began to vibrate. Richard advanced alone towards the crowd. "What do you, my friends?" he exclaimed. "Tyler was a traitor; it is I who am your captain and your guide." And he drew after him this irresolute mob, deprived of their chief, and who marched without knowing whither they were bound. They arrived in the fields near Islington. The friends of the king had rallied round him. One of the chiefs of his free bands, Sir Robert Knowles, brought a body of men-at-



ADVANCING TOWARDS THE REBEL HE STRUCK HIM A BLOW WITH HIS DAGGER.

arms. The insurgents took alarm, threw down their bows, and cried "Mercy!" The king would not suffer them to be slaughtered in a mass, to the great exasperation of Sir Robert Knowles. "He said that he would be even with them on another occasion," says Froissart; "in which he did not fail."

The insurrections subsided everywhere. The Bishop of Norwich had armed his household and his friends, and hastening to throw himself upon the peasants, he had easily defeated these confused masses, little accustomed to arms. He had himself drawn up their indictment and pronounced their sentence; then, resuming his clerical costume, he had exhorted them, received their confession, absolved them, and finally accompanied them to the gallows. The king was at the head of a small army, and had marched against the remainder of the insurgents of Essex. It was no longer a question of charters; the courts of commission were everywhere assembling to try the guilty. The two priests, Jack Straw and John Ball, were hanged. Lester and Wistbroom, who had assumed the title of "Kings of the Commons" in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, suffered the same fate. About fifteen hundred rioters were executed. It was found necessary to fix them to the gibbet with iron chains; their friends came by night to carry off their bodies.

The Parliament had assembled, publicly approving of the abolition of the concessions granted to the villeins during the struggle. "We would never have consented to them," said the barons, "even had we all been compelled to perish on the same day." For the moment, there was some talk of abolishing servitude; but the opposition was so strenuous, the proprietors of fiefs declared so loudly that their serfs belonged to them by right, and that they could not be deprived of them without their consent, that the idea was immediately abandoned, and the high treason law was voted, condemning "riots, disturbances, and other analogous things," in terms as dangerous as they were vague. The king demanded money, the commons claimed a complete amnesty; neither would begin to make concessions. The Parliament at length yielded; the tax upon wool and

leather was prolonged for five years, and the king proclaimed the amnesty; he was about to wed Anne of Bohemia, soon known throughout the whole of her kingdom as "the good queen." The Bishop of Norwich was fighting in Flanders, in support of the citizens of Ghent hard pressed by their count, recently a victor at the battle of Rosebecque, where Philip van Arteveldt had been killed; and the uncles of the king contended with each other for the authority in England. The Earl of Cambridge had been made Duke of York, and the Earl of Buckingham Duke of Gloucester. Henry Bolingbroke, son of the Duke of Lancaster, had become Earl of Derby: at the same time, the king had made Earl of Suffolk and Duke of Ireland, his favourites Michael de la Pole and Robert de Vere, obscure persons, whom the Princess of Wales had placed beside her son, by reason of her jealousy towards his uncles; and who contributed, by their influence, to the struggles and disputes of the government. The princess had recently died, having succumbed beneath the weight of the anxieties caused by one of her sons, Lord John Holland; he had recently assassinated one of the servants of the king, and was unable to quit the church in which he had taken refuge. Plot succeeded plot—denunciation to denunciation. At length, the Duke of Lancaster started out for Spain, in order to sustain the pretensions of his wife to the throne of Castile; and he contrived, after two campaigns, to marry his eldest daughter to the heir of Henry of Transtamare, thus assuring the crown to her children. The Scots had crossed the frontier, and King Richard entered Scotland. France was preparing a great armament.

Amidst these external preoccupations, the Duke of Gloucester had seized the reins of government; and, when the young king threatened to dissolve a Parliament devoted to his uncle, the Commons brought forward the Act which had deposed Edward II. A council of barons for awhile governed the kingdom, under the presidency of Gloucester. Blood flowed everywhere; the duke avenged himself upon the favourites of the king, who were as odious to him as to the English people. He had impeached

them before the Parliament: the innocent were involved in the ruin of the guilty. Gloucester did not even spare Sir Simon Burley, formerly the tutor of the king, the friend of Edward III. and the Black Prince, and who had conducted the negotiations for the marriage of Richard. The queen in vain threw herself at his feet asking for mercy; in vain did Henry Bolingbroke, who had seconded his uncle in all his undertakings, claim as a right the pardon of the condemned man: Burley was executed, and Bolingbroke became definitively at variance with Gloucester.

The disorder which prevailed in England did not prevent constant hostilities upon the frontiers of Scotland; it was on the 15th of August, 1388, that took place at Otterburn, the famous battle celebrated in the ballads under the name of Chevy Chase, between the Earl of Douglas and Lord Henry Percy, the Hotspur of Shakspeare. Douglas was slain, but the English ended by being repulsed from the battle-field. Hotspur and his brother were prisoners. The king was beginning to weary of the yoke which he had so long borne. He was subject to gleams of resolution and courage, which soon disappeared in a long spell of indolence, and which took by surprise those who calculated upon his habitual apathy. A council was being held in the month of May, 1389; the king suddenly addressed the Duke of Gloucester. "How old do you suppose I am, uncle?" he asked. "Your highness is in your twenty-second year," replied the duke, much surprised. "Then," replied the king, "I am at an age when I should govern my own affairs. Nobody in my kingdom has been so long held under tutelage. I thank you for your services, my lord, but I no longer require them." And he immediately caused the great seal and the keys of the treasury to be given up to himself, compelling the Duke of Gloucester to leave the council, and announcing publicly to the nation that he had henceforth assumed the direction of the government. But his fleeting energy had already abandoned him. The Duke of York and Henry Bolingbroke were his masters, instead of the Duke of Gloucester.

John of Gaunt had returned from Castile; he had become

reconciled with his brothers. Concord appeared re-established in the royal family; a truce had been concluded with France and Scotland. The King of Scotland, Robert II., had died on the 19th of April, 1390, and his eldest son had assumed the title of Robert III. Queen Anne had also died, in 1394, and King Richard, who had no children, married two years later, much against the wishes of his subjects, the Princess Isabel, daughter of Charles VI., king of France. She was but seven years old; but the king conceived the liveliest affection for her, and conducted her everywhere with him upon his travels. An expedition in Ireland against the insurgent chiefs had been very successful; but the Duke of Gloucester protested with all his might against the alliance with France. "Our Edwards," he said, "caused Paris to tremble even in its entrails; but, under Richard, we court the French, who make us tremble within London." The duke had his reasons for trembling: the king had not forgotten the execution of his favourites, nor the men who had signed their indictment. The Earl of Warwick, one of the accomplices of Gloucester, was already arrested; the Earl of Arundel soon followed. The Duke of Gloucester had retired to Pleshy Castle, in Essex; his nephew repaired there in gay company: all the family came forward to meet the king; but, while the duchess was conversing with him, Gloucester was arrested by the marshal of England, dragged as far as the river, thrown into a boat, and from thence a vessel bore him towards Calais. A rumour was thereupon spread that he had been assassinated; the king published a proclamation declaring that the arrests had been made with the approval of his uncles of Lancaster and York, as well as of his cousin, the Earl of Derby. He had even obtained, by a ruse, their signatures to the impeachment. Lord Arundel was condemned by the Parliament, and immediately executed; his brother, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was not even admitted to plead his cause, for the king dreaded his eloquence; he was banished for life, and the Earl of Warwick, at first condemned to death, was imprisoned in the Isle of Man. The House of Lords then called the Duke of Glou-

cester for judgment; but the marshal replied that he could not bring the Lord Duke, who had for several days been dead at Calais. He was condemned, however, and all his goods were confiscated; it was said that he had been suffocated between two mattresses. The judges were not without uneasiness concerning the application which they had just made of the high treason law: nearly all had been, at different periods, compromised in plots or insurrections. They obtained of the king an amnesty for the past; and, as a reward for present services, Richard made his cousin the Earl of Derby, Duke of Hereford; the Earl of Nottingham became Duke of Norfolk, and John Holland, the murderer, was made Duke of Exeter. The Parliament completed its work of complaisance by granting to the king, for life, a subsidy upon woollens, and by forming a commission, entrusted to watch affairs. King Richard was no longer in a hurry to appeal to his people, or to convoke the Parliament.

The conduct of the king towards his uncle the Duke of Gloucester and his friends, the vengeance which had overtaken, after so many years, the enemies of the favourites, revealed the character of the sovereign in a light which caused uneasiness in the country. Indolent and prodigal, habitually engrossed in the pleasures of luxury and magnificence, Richard was not only capable of momentary energy, but he maintained in the bottom of his heart projects which he shaped to his purposes with patient perseverance. Once delivered of the Parliament and of the Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Lancaster aged and in retirement in his castle, Richard gave himself up to all his whims, certain, as he thought, of encountering no serious opposition. "At that time," says Froissart, "no one was great enough in England to dare to speak against the will of the king. He had a council obedient to his wishes, who begged him to do as he pleased; and he had in his pay ten thousand archers, who guarded him day and night." The extravagances of the court were insensate, and the people began to complain, looking back regretfully upon the government of the king's uncles, who had

shown some consideration, they said, for the nation, and consulted it in its own affairs.

Two great noblemen alone remained of those who had, in 1386, seconded the efforts of the Duke of Gloucester against the favourites of the king; and, notwithstanding the favour shown to them by Richard, they did not feel secure in their positions. The Duke of Norfolk, galloping upon the road to Windsor, in the month of December, 1397, encountered the Duke of Hereford. "We are ruined," said he to his friend. "Wherefore?" asked Bolingbroke. "For that affair at Radcot Bridge."[1] "What! after so many pardons and declarations by the Parliament?" rejoined Bolingbroke. "He will annul all that, and we shall pass through the ordeal like the others; the world in which we live is strangely perfidious." The Duke of Norfolk soon had reason to be convinced of this. Either through thoughtlessness or through treachery, the conversation was reported to the king; he convoked the Parliament, and his first care in the month of January, 1398, was to summon Henry Bolingbroke to render an account of the words of the Duke of Norfolk. The latter was not present, but upon the summons of the Parliament, he came to throw down his glove at the feet of the Duke of Hereford, declaring him a traitor and a perjurer: the combat was authorized between the two noblemen. "I shall then at length have peace," muttered the king, while proceeding to Coventry, on the 16th of September, to be present at the tournament But having once confronted the two antagonists, he became fearful of a victory for one of them, and, forbidding the ordeal, he submitted the question to a Parliamentary commission chosen by himself. The Duke of Hereford was condemned to an exile of ten years. The Duke of Norfolk was banished for ever. He thereupon started for the Holy Land, and died of grief at Venice. But Henry Bolingbroke did not go far away; he remained in France, watching the movements of his cousin Richard, who lavished the riches of England with so

[1] The Duke of Ireland (Robert de Vere) had been defeated by Gloucester and his companions, at Radcot Bridge.

thoughtless a hand, that his treasury was constantly empty. His favourites would then help him to replenish it by exactions of every kind. The Duke of Lancaster had died three months after the departure of his son; his immense property was confiscated, notwithstanding the protests of Bolingbroke. A decree outlawed seventeen counties of England, as having been favourable to the enemies of the king; they were compelled to buy back their rights with enormous fines. The disaffection increased, but the king took no heed whatever of it. He embarked towards the end of May, 1390, for Ireland, where his cousin and heir-apparent, the Earl of March, had recently been assassinated. He had just taken the field against the rebels, when Henry Bolingbroke landed, on the 4th of July, at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, having escaped from France under the pretext of paying a visit to the Duke of Brittany.

Bolingbroke had brought with him a feeble following, the exiled Archbishop of Canterbury, and his nephew, the Earl of Arundel, fifteen knights and men-at-arms, and a few servants; but scarcely had he touched the English soil, when the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland joined him, bringing with them considerable forces. Henry did not disclose his ulterior projects to anybody; he came, he said, to claim his right, the inheritance of his father, which the king had wrongly confiscated of him; and the public feeling was so favourable to him, the nation was so weary of seeing itself ill-governed, that the malcontents rose in all parts to place themselves under his standard. He was, it is said, at the head of an army of sixty thousand men when he advanced towards London. The Duke of York, regent of the kingdom in the absence of Richard, did not rely upon the burgesses of the City; he had quitted the capital, and displayed the royal standard at St. Alban's. Terror began to seize the creatures of the king: instead of marching against the rebels, they cowardly shut themselves up in the fortified castles. The Duke of York had taken the western road, pending the return of King Richard; but Bolingbroke had used diligence, and he arrived at the Severn on the same day as the regent. The

latter placed little confidence in his troops; he was aware of the general discontent, and he retained in the bottom of his heart a bitter resentment for the murder of his brother Gloucester. He granted an interview to his nephew Bolingbroke: the firm, bold, and cunning mind of Henry triumphed easily over the feeble will of the Duke of York; the two armies were amalgamated, and the regent helped the usurper to take Bristol Castle. There the members of the commission which had formerly condemned Bolingbroke had taken refuge; they were executed without any other form of trial, and the Duke of Lancaster marched upon Chester, leaving his uncle at Bristol.

For three weeks Richard had remained in ignorance of what was taking place in his kingdom. When he at length learnt the news of the landing of Henry and his formidable progresses, he exclaimed bitterly, "Ah! my good uncle of Lancaster, the Lord have mercy on your soul! If I had believed you, although this man might be your son, he would never have harmed me. Three times I have forgiven him; this is his fourth offence." The Earl of Salisbury immediately set sail to assemble together some troops in England; he had raised pretty considerable forces in Wales; but the king delayed, the soldiers murmured and dispersed by degrees; a large number went and joined the rebels. The king at length disembarked with his cousin, the Duke of Albemarle, and his two brothers, the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey. The little army which he had taken to Ireland followed him; but at the second halting-place, when the king, having risen very early, looked through the window towards the camp, where on the previous evening, six thousand soldiers had slept, he no longer saw but a handful of archers and men-at-arms: all had deserted during the night. The king was advised to take refuge at Bordeaux. "That would be to abdicate," said his brother, the Duke of Exeter. It was resolved that they should join the Earl of Salisbury, and the king, disguised as a priest, took the road to Conway, with his brothers and a few servants, while the Duke of Albemarle, following the

example of his father, the Duke of York, fled by night to join the army of the usurper.

The Earl of Salisbury had not a hundred men with him when the king arrived at Conway. In this deplorable situation, the brothers of King Richard proposed to go to Henry at Chester in order to ascertain his pretensions. The two dukes did not return; their cousin Bolingbroke received them kindly, but he positively refused to release them: all his efforts were directed towards seizing the king in person. The Earl of Northumberland was entrusted with this mission. By false promises he enticed the king out of Conway, proposing an interview with Bolingbroke at Flint. Richard was almost alone, abandoned; he followed the earl with the friends who remained to him. They galloped along slowly, when suddenly the king cried, "I am betrayed! Lord in Heaven, help me! Do you not see banners and pennants flying in the valley?" Northumberland advanced at the same time. "My lord," the unhappy monarch said to him abruptly, "if I thought you capable of betraying me, I could yet retreat." "No," replied the Earl, who had laid hold of his bridle; "I have promised to conduct you to the Duke of Lancaster." The soldiers of Northumberland began to appear; the king yielded to necessity. "Our Saviour was sold and delivered into the hands of His enemies," he murmured.

They arrived at Flint. Henry Bolingbroke, in all his armour, came forward to meet his royal cousin, and bent his knee on approaching. "Good cousin of Lancaster," said Richard courteously, "you are welcome." "My lord," replied Henry, "I have come before my time, but I will tell you the reason: your people complain that you have governed them harshly for twenty-two years; if it please God, I will help you to rule them better." "Since it pleases you, it pleases me also," meekly replied the fallen monarch; and, seated upon a wretched courser, like a prisoner, King Richard took the road to Chester, side by side with Henry Bolingbroke. Froissart relates that his very dog abandoned him to lick the hand of the usurper.

At Lichfield Richard attempted to escape; but he was seized

as he had just issued forth through a window, and more narrowly guarded than before. The people of London received him with yells and insults. The usurper repaired to St. Paul's, prayed upon the tomb of his father, and then took possession of the palace. The king had been led to the Tower.

The Parliament was convoked, and ready to depose Richard II., as it had formerly deposed his great-grandfather; but Henry Bolingbroke, with a bitter foresight of the mutability of human things, wished to secure the personal consent and the voluntary abdication of the king. He held him narrowly confined within the Tower. "Why do you cause me to be thus guarded?" Richard angrily exclaimed one day; "Am I your king or your prisoner?" "You are my king," replied the duke; "but the council of your kingdom have seen fit to place a guard beside your person." On the eve of the opening of Parliament, a deputation of prelates and barons paid a visit to the unhappy king in the Tower, and asked him to abdicate. Richard felt himself powerless in the hands of his enemies; he yielded, "willingly and joyfully," say the acts of Parliament; and, releasing his subjects from their oath, he consigned his royal ring to his cousin of Lancaster, saying that he would choose him for his successor, if he had the right to designate him. These details are open to doubt, but the Parliament held them good, and on the 30th of September, before the empty throne, in Westminster Hall, the abdication of Richard was read aloud, all the members giving their consent to it. The people uttered cries of joy. The coronation oath was then brought, and, at each article, proclaimed aloud, the impeachment of King Richard was drawn up. He was accused of the murder of his uncle Gloucester; of having revoked the amnesties, and of having squandered the public money. Nobody raised his voice for the dethroned monarch until the Bishop of Carlisle, Thomas Merks, rose and publicly denied the right of the Parliament to depose the king and to change the order of succession, at the same time defending Richard against his accusers. Scarcely had he finished his discourse, when he was arrested. While he was



THE OFFICERS OF THE CROWN AND THE GREAT NOBLEMEN VOWED FEALTY AND HOMAGE.

being conducted to St. Alban's, the Parliament pronounced the deposition of Richard, and the Lord Chief Justice was instructed to announce his fall to him. "I care not to court the regal authority," said the deposed king; "I only hope that my good cousin will be a good master to me."

His good cousin was not yet legally king; the descendants of Lionel, the third son of Edward III., were the legitimate heirs to the throne; no one, however, thought of them. The Duke of Lancaster had remained in his seat; his surrounders waited in profound silence. He rose, and, solemnly making the sign of the cross, said in a very loud voice, "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, lay claim to this kingdom of England and to the crown, as a descendant of the good King Henry III., and by the right which God has given me, by granting to me the favour, through the support of my friends, to come to the assistance of this country, which was about to perish under bad laws and for want of government."

This mixture of hereditary pretensions with popular rights was skilful. The Parliament responded to the appeal of Henry Bolingbroke; acclamations broke out in all parts; the duke showed the ring which Richard had consigned to him; the Archbishop of Canterbury took him by the hand and led him to the foot of the throne. Henry knelt there for a moment; he then ascended the steps and seated himself resolutely. The plaudits recommenced during the discourse of the archbishop. "I thank you, my lord," said the new monarch; "and I wish everybody to know that, by right of conquest, I will disinherit nobody of his rights, but wish that all may be governed by the good laws of the kingdom, and may hold what he has by right." The officers of the crown and the great noblemen also vowed fealty and homage: Henry IV. was king of England.

In the first days of his reign, the new sovereign was enabled to believe that public opinion fully confirmed his usurpation. All the great noblemen were eager to fulfil at his coronation their hereditary offices; the Earl of Northumberland alone, who

had rendered eminent services to him, marched beside him in the procession, holding aloft in sight of all the sword worn by Bolingbroke on landing at Ravenspur. The House of Commons responded to the slightest wishes of the king, and the greater number of the unpopular measures of the last reign were withdrawn by common consent. A great uproar arose in the House of Lords: the peers who had appealed against the Duke of Gloucester were summoned to exculpate themselves; all took their stand upon the wish of King Richard, upon the fear which he inspired, and upon the unanimous vote of the House. Recriminations poured down in every part; forty gauntlets were thrown upon the ground as challenges to combat. A weak and timid monarch would have taken alarm in the midst of this violent confusion: Henry IV. was enabled to calm the agitation. He divested the "lords appellant," as they were styled, of the titles which Richard had given to them as rewards; the Dukes of Albemarle, Surrey, and Exeter, the Marquis of Dorset and the Earl of Gloucester, became once more the Earls of Rutland, Kent, Huntingdon, and Somerset, and Lord Le Despencer; but the new king wreaked no other vengeance upon them. The high treason law was restored to more limited and less vague formulæ; appeals to the Houses in cases of treason were abolished, and the Parliament was forbidden to delegate its authority to a commission. The eldest son of the king was declared Prince of Wales, Duke of Guienne, Lancaster, and Cornwall, as well as heir presumptive to the throne. Henry was too prudent to again raise the question of the law of succession which he had so boldly disregarded: he did not wish his hereditary right to the throne to be discussed; he well knew that the little Earl of March, so carefully installed in Windsor Castle, was the real heir to the throne, as great-grandson of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the elder brother of John of Gaunt. The child was not nine years of age; the king caused him to be well brought up, as well as his brother, and neither was destined to recover his liberty during his lifetime; but their sister, soon afterwards married to the Earl of Cambridge, had transmitted to the House

of York those rights or those pretensions which condemned England to half a century of civil war.

Difficulties abound in the path of usurpers. King Richard had not protested, he had asked for nothing, but he still lived in the Tower. Before dissolving the Parliament, King Henry IV. despatched the Earl of Northumberland to the House of Lords. The latter asked that the message with which he was entrusted should be kept secret; he then consulted the House upon the manner in which the dispossessed king was to be treated; "for my master Henry," he added, "has resolved, at any cost, to preserve the life of Richard." The Lords all replied that King Richard should be secretly led away to some castle, and placed in the hands of faithful custodians, who should prevent all communication with his friends. This was the sanction which Henry IV. wished for; the dispossessed monarch was conducted to Leeds Castle, in Kent, and then transferred by night from castle to castle, as had been his great-grandfather, Edward II. In the month of January, Richard had arrived in Pontefract Castle, in Yorkshire.

The removal of the dethroned king could not suffice to strengthen the power; conspiracies were already beginning. The lords appellant had scarcely been punished, but their fears as well as their resentment urged them to revenge. They had formed the project of assassinating Henry and of replacing Richard upon the throne. A tournament was announced at Oxford for the 3rd of January, and the Earl of Huntingdon, the brother-in-law of the king, invited the latter to be present thereat. The invitation was accepted. The murder was to be accomplished during the jousts; the king and his son were to succumb beneath numbers. The day came; the king had not arrived, and the Earl of Rutland was absent from the place of meeting. The conspirators saw themselves betrayed; but a bold stroke might yet save them; they galloped to Windsor, and took possession of the castle. The king was no longer there: warned in time, he had taken refuge in London. The arrest warrrants were already issued against the traitors, and, on the

morrow, Henry marched against them, at the head of a considerable force. They did not await him, and fled to arm their vassals. Civil war appeared imminent; but public opinion was with King Henry: it administered justice to the conspirators, without the king being obliged to interfere. The citizens of Cirencester seized the Earls of Kent and Salisbury, and struck off their heads; Lord Le Despencer was beheaded by the citizens of Bristol; the Earl of Huntingdon was dismembered at Pleshy by the servants of the late Duke of Gloucester. The king had only to cause the trial of a few accomplices of low degree, but the attempt of the lords appellant probably cost the life of King Richard; it was learnt, towards the end of January, that he had died at Pontefract. It was related that he had refused to take any food since the death of his brothers, the Earls of Kent and Huntingdon; distrustful people asserted that he had been starved to death. Others maintained that he had been attacked in his prison by some assassins, and that, after having valiantly defended himself, he had been killed by a blow behind the head. When the body of the unhappy monarch was brought to London, before being interred at Langley a portion only of the face was uncovered. The details of his death were for ever unknown, and many people were resolute in denying it.

The little Queen Isabel had remained in England during the lifetime of her husband, notwithstanding her father's wish to see her return to his side. The death of his son-in-law caused one of his most fatal attacks of insanity to poor King Charles VI.; but his uncles were anxious to profit by the indignation which was manifested at Bordeaux, the birthplace of the deposed monarch; the Dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon advanced towards Guienne, and the first movement of the population was favourable to their wish. "Richard was the best man in his kingdom," it was said at Bordeaux, "and the people of London have treacherously abandoned him." But as the French army advanced, the ardour of the Gascons abated. The French were poor, and annoyed by subsidies and taxes, which were sometimes reproduced upon two or three occasions during the year.

"We are not accustomed to be treated thus," said the English subjects, "and it would be too hard upon us. We have still a king, and he will send his ministers to us to explain himself. Meanwhile, we have a large commerce with England, in wine, in wool, and in cloth." The uncles of the king were compelled to retire without having accomplished anything. Henry IV. was in no hurry to renew the war with France; he caused a proposal to be made to marry the little Queen to the Prince of Wales; but the father and the daughter rejected this alliance. Charles VI. claimed with Isabel his jewels and the two hundred thousand livres in gold which King Richard had received upon her dowry. Henry was poor and the sum considerable; when the young Queen was at length consigned to her family, in the month of August, 1401, the ambassadors of England replied to the claims of the French by a demand for a hundred and fifty thousand crowns of gold which remained due upon the ransom of King John the Good. The question of the dowry of Isabel was no longer mooted, and peace subsisted between the two countries during the greater part of the reign of Henry IV., notwithstanding the challenges of the Duke of Orleans and Wallerand of Luxembourg, Count of Ligny and St. Pol, which gave rise to slight hostilities upon the coasts. Good warrior as he was, the King of England had too much to do at home, and too much trouble to consolidate his throne to seek afar for hazardous adventures.

At the very outset of his reign, however, and on the morrow of the conspiracy of the lords appellant, Henry had attempted an expedition into Scotland. Not daring to ask subsidies of the Parliament, the king had had recourse to the military service of the feudal system, and, convoking under his banners all holders of fiefs, and furnished with the tithe voted by the clergy, he had advanced as far as Edinburgh, to summon King Robert, the Duke of Rothsay, his son, and all the great Scottish noblemen to come and render homage to him. Robert III. was aged, feeble, and infirm; he had abandoned the power to his brother, the Duke of Albany, constantly at contention with the

heir to the throne, the Duke of Rothsay, sanguine, thoughtless, and venturesome. The young duke hastened to Edinburgh, to defend it. Henry was repulsed; his provisions failed him: he was compelled to withdraw from Scotland, having reaped no other glory in this campaign than the humanity towards the peasants, of which he had given proofs, and the discipline which he had been enabled to maintain in his army.

While the King of England was fighting and suffering failure in Scotland, an unexpected insurrection broke out in Wales. A lawyer, who had afterwards served as esquire in the house of the Earl of Arundel, a Welshman,—descending, it was said, from Llewellyn, the last Welsh prince,—Owen Glendower or Glendwyr, had seen his little estate encroached upon through the avidity of a powerful neighbour, Lord Grey de Ruthyn. Owen had appealed to the Parliament; his complaint had been rejected. The Welshman resolved to avenge himself by force of arms, and drove from his lands the servants of Lord Grey. He was thereupon outlawed. His pretensions grew with his anger; it was no longer a question of a little field or of a cluster of trees; Owen Glendwyr publicly proclaimed his illustrious origin, laying claim to the independent sovereignty of Wales. Fire smouldered under the ashes among those people, subjected for so many years; the love of national liberty was not extinguished. From all parts the Welsh hastened round Owen; students quitted their universities, labourers their ploughshares, at the call of independence. At the beginning of the year 1401, King Henry IV. found himself compelled to proceed to Wales with an army. But Owen was too shrewd to hazard a pitched battle; he left to the climate and to famine the task of fighting for him. From the mountains in which he had taken refuge, he soon saw King Henry compelled to retire. A second campaign, attempted in 1402, was not more fortunate: the rain fell in torrents; the rivers became swollen at the approach of the English soldiers, who left Wales convinced that Glendwyr was a sorcerer in league with the elements.

The rumour that King Richard was still living had come

once more to be circulated in Scotland and in the North of England, restoring a certain amount of courage to the malcontents. In vain had King Henry severely punished the fomenters of this news; Richard was expected with the Scottish army, when it entered into England in the spring of 1402. At the head of the English opposition was a Scotchman, George, earl of March. The Duke of Rothsay was to have married his daughter, and had then rejected her, to unite himself with the family of the Earl of Douglas, the hereditary enemy of the Earls of March. The Earl of March had thereupon renounced his allegiance to the King of Scotland, and had allied himself with the Percies, all powerful in the county of Northumberland. It was with his assistance that the Scots were defeated and repulsed at Nesbit Moor, in June 1402. Internal rancours soon brought forward a second army; the Earl of Douglas, furious at the success of his rival, solicited the assistance of the Duke of Albany, and, at the head of a considerable force, he soon overran the two banks of Tyne. Having advanced as far as Newcastle, he was falling back, loaded with booty, when the Earls of Northumberland and March cut off his road on the 14th of September. The Scots covered Homildon Hill, and the English were stationed opposite upon another elevation. Hotspur Percy had already commanded the charge of his men-at-arms, when the Earl of March restrained him by the arm. "Let your archers commence," he said; "the turn of your horsemen will soon come." Arrows rained down upon the Scots deployed upon the flank of the hill: Douglas did not stir; his men were falling in their ranks, when a Scottish baron, Fordun Swinton, at length cried, "Ah! my brave comrades, who restrains you to-day, that you should remain there, like deer or stags, to allow yourselves to be killed, instead of displaying your former valour by fighting man to man! Let us descend from here in the name of God!" And the Scottish men-at-arms, thereupon moving, caused the English archers to fall back. The latter, however, continued to shoot, and Douglas received five wounds; he fell from his horse, and was made a

prisoner. Disorder set in in the Scottish ranks; the flower of their chivalry had been decimated by the arrows or had surrendered without striking a blow.

The son of the Duke of Albany, Murdoch Stewart, was among the number of the prisoners. The English knights had not raised their lances or drawn their swords; the battle had been won by the archers of old England. The Earl of Northumberland arrived on the 20th of October at the Parliament convoked at Westminster, gloriously accompanied by all his prisoners.

The Percies had recently gained a victory for King Henry IV., whom they had so powerfully contributed to place upon the throne. They were about to turn their arms against him. Shakspeare attributes their discontent to the prohibition which the king put upon their setting ransoms upon their prisoners, a measure which deprived them of all the pecuniary advantage of the capture; but this interdiction had been frequent under the preceding reigns, particularly under Edward III., and King Henry IV. indemnified the Earl of Northumberland by granting vast domains to him. Another cause for anger had recently sprung up. During the lucky campaigns of Owen Glendwyr the latter had captured his old enemy, Lord Grey de Ruthyn, and Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle of the young Earl of March, the legitimate heir to the throne. The relatives of Lord Grey had been authorized to redeem him; but the king had refused the same favour to the family of Sir Edmund. Hotspur Percy had married his sister, and, acutely wounded by this refusal, he began to set on foot a conspiracy to overthrow the king and place the crown upon the head of the little Earl of March. He was confirmed in this resolution by the Archbishop of York, Scrope, brother of the favourite of Richard II.; and the conspirators did not hesitate to call Owen Glendwyr to their aid. He gave his daughter in marriage to Mortimer, and promised to invade England with twelve thousand Welshmen. The Earl of Douglas was liberated without any ransom, on condition of recrossing the frontier with a Scottish army. It is even said that Hotspur wrote to the Duke of Orleans, from whom

King Henry had recently received a warlike challenge on account of the insults offered to Queen Isabel.

So many movements had not escaped the vigilant eye of King Henry. Hotspur was marching forward, commanding the rebels in place of his father, who was ill; and supported by his uncle, the Earl of Worcester. Henry planted his army corps between the earls and Owen Glendwyr, with whom they were endeavouring to effect a junction. The Welshman had made no haste, and when, on arriving at Shrewsbury, Henry received the challenge of his enemies, it was conceived only in the name of the Percies. They reproached the king with his usurpation, the death of Richard, the captivity of the little Earl of March, his manœuvres in the election of Parliament, the levying of taxes which had not been voted by the Commons, &c. At the end appeared the real subject of the quarrel, the denial of the negotiations relating to Sir Edmund Mortimer. Henry IV. smiled bitterly and disdained to reply. "The sword shall decide," he said, "and I am assured that God will give me victory over perjured traitors.' It was on the 20th of July, 1403; on the morrow the two armies found themselves face to face on Shrewsbury Plain.

The insurgents numbered about fourteen thousand men; the king had no more. Before fighting, he despatched the Abbot of Shrewsbury to his adversaries, with proposals for peace. Hotspur, less impetuous than Shakspeare has depicted him, hesitated; but the Earl of Worcester persuaded him to reject the royal overtures. "Banners to the front, then!" cried Henry. The combat began. "St. George!" was the cry around the king. "Hope! Percy!" responded the rebels. The archers were drawing on both sides, and the knights did not abandon to them, as at Homildon Hill, all the honour of the combat. Percy and Douglas, rivals in glory, had precipitated themselves together into the midst of the enemy with a small following; everything gave way before them; the Prince of Wales had been wounded in the face. They sought for the king; but, upon the advice of the Scottish refugee, the Earl of

March, he had laid aside, for that day, all the royal insignia, and he fought valiantly, without having been recognized. At the moment when the two chiefs of the insurgents endeavoured to retrace their steps, opening up a way through the crowd of the enemies, Percy was struck by an arrow in the head, and fell dead. Disorder immediately set in among his partisans. Douglas had been made a prisoner; the Earl of Worcester shortly afterwards suffered the same fate, as well as the Lord of Kinderton and Sir Richard Vernon. The traitors' punishment awaited the three Englishmen. Douglas was honourably treated. The field of battle was covered with dead and dying. The insurgents had fled; they went and carried to the old Earl of Northumberland the news of the defeat and death of his son. He was marching forward to join him, and he thereupon shut himself up in his castle at Warkworth. Being summoned to appear before the king at York, he was detained there in honourable captivity until the Parliament should have decided upon his fate. He had not taken part personally in the insurrection, and he declared that his son had acted without his approval. The Lords treated him with indulgence; he retired after having sworn fidelity to the king and the Prince of Wales. Eighteen months had not elapsed before he was again in arms against Henry.

The conspiracies had not ceased in this interval. A former chamberlain of King Richard, named Serle, had again spread the rumour that that monarch was living. He led about with him a poor idiot who resembled Richard, and a certain number of partisans had rallied round him. Three princes of the House of Bourbon had attacked the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, and burnt down the town of Plymouth; the French vessels had brought reinforcements to Owen Glendwyr, against whom the young Prince of Wales was at war; and a woman, Lady Le Despencer, had carried off the young Earl of March and his brother. She was already approaching the frontiers of Wales when she was seized, and the prisoners were brought back to Windsor. She exculpated herself by throwing the responsibility

of the undertaking upon her brother, the Duke of York, formerly Earl of Rutland. He was arrested, and languished for several years in prison.

King Henry had always avoided asking large subsidies of the Parliament; he was not sufficiently assured of the affection of his people to ask any sacrifices of them. In 1404, however, he had come to an end of his resources, and in a parliament which has preserved the name of unlearned, because the king had, it was said, dismissed from it all the lawyers, he made a proposal which was ardently sustained by the Commons: it forbade the king to alienate the property of the crown without the authorization of Parliament, but permitted him to take back all the gifts of land and the pensions granted by his predecessors; he was even allowed to seize a certain portion of the property of the clergy. The Church uttered a cry of terror and rage, which arrested the zeal of the king and the Commons. Henry hastened to renounce his project, assuring the Archbishop of Canterbury that it was his intention to leave the Church in a better position than he had found it in; but he accomplished his resolutions upon the lands and pensions given by Edward III. and Richard II. The disaffection of the barons was great, and the uneasiness of the clergy was not dispelled.

In 1405, two great councils were convoked by the king: in London and at St. Alban's. There the bad state of feeling was manifested; all the demands of the king were rejected, and more than one baron quitted St. Alban's to join the insurgents, who were again beginning to form in groups round the Earl of Northumberland. The Archbishop of York had this time taken up arms; he was made a prisoner, as well as the Earl of Nottingham, by Prince John, the second son of the king. In vain did the archbishop claim ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the earl, that of his peers; in vain did Chief Justice Gascoyne refuse to preside at their trial: the king had resolved to make an example. He found some more complaisant magistrates; the archbishop and the Earl of Nottingham were beheaded; a fine was imposed upon the city of York, temporarily deprived of its

charters, and the king marched against Berwick, where the Earl of Northumberland had taken refuge. On the way he caused Lord Hastings and Lord Falconbridge to be tried, and they were beheaded. Berwick surrendered; but the old Percy had fled to Edinburgh, and the king did not penetrate into Scotland; he contented himself with ravaging Northumberland, taking possession of all the castles which belonged to the rebels. He then turned his arms in the direction of Wales, where Prince Henry had valiantly ustained the struggle for nearly two years. He had triumphed over the Welsh at Grosmont, in Monmouthshire, in the month of March, 1405 ; one of the sons of Owen Glendwyr had been made a prisoner, and the prince had only been arrested in the course of his successes by the arrival of a French reinforcement sent by the Duke of Orleans, in defiance of the truce which still reigned between the two nations. The young Prince Henry had been compelled to withdraw to Worcester; but the king soon drove the French into the mountains of Wales, whither he pursued them. The Welsh arrested his march; but the French were weary of their reverses, of the poverty of their allies, of the rough life which they led; they retreated into their vessels again. The king withdrew in his turn; Prince Henry continued the war with alternations of successes and reverses, always holding his ground with a skill and perseverance worthy of his adversary, and which finally wearied the population. Glendwyr found himself gradually abandoned, and an invasion attempted in 1409 by his son-in-law, Scudamore, in Shropshire, completed the ruin of his cause; the Welsh were repulsed, and the chiefs put to death. The independent character of Owen Glendywr allowed him neither to submit nor to despair; he no longer appeared in the regions occupied by the English, but he still maintained himself in the mountains, resuming his arms when his enemies pressed him closely in his haunts; his name, published several times in the amnesty acts, prove that he was neither dead nor subjugated, even after the battle of Agincourt. The period of his death and the place of his burial are unknown; the end of his life remains enveloped in mystery,

as though he had really possessed the magic power which his friends and enemies attributed to him in his lifetime.

King Henry had not been under the necessity of prosecuting his campaigns in Scotland; he held in his hands the heir to the throne of that kingdom. The Duke of Rothsay, imprudent and bold, had entered into a contention with his uncle, the Duke of Albany. Being accused of rebellion and imprisoned in Falkland Castle, he had there died of hunger, it was said. The unhappy King Robert had become alarmed for the life of James, the only son who remained to him, and he had embarked him upon a ship which was to take him to France, but the vessel had fallen into the hands of some English cruisers, who brought the prince in triumph to King Henry. "I speak French as well as my brother Charles," the king had said laughingly, "and I am as well adapted as he to bring up a King of Scotland." The young Prince James therefore remained at the court of England, closely guarded, but educated with care, kindly treated, and at liberty to devote himself to his passion for poetry. The old king Robert had died of grief in 1406, and the Duke of Albany, who continued to govern Scotland, servilely submitted to the wishes of the King of England, who, at the least appearance of insubordination, threatened him with the release of his nephew. This state of affairs was destined to be prolonged for a considerable time.

The most irreconcilable adversary of the king had at length succumbed. The old Earl of Northumberland, homeless, childless, and without riches, had wandered for more than two years from kingdom to kingdom, endeavouring to raise up embarrassments and enemies against King Henry. At the beginning of 1408, he appeared in Northumberland with Lord Bardolf, the friend and companion of his whole life. Rallying a certain number of his old vassals, he overran the country, took possession of several castles, and had gathered together a small body of troops, when he was defeated on the 28th of February, by Sir Thomas Rokeby, upon Branham Heath, near Tadcaster. He was killed in the combat; Lord Bardolf, grievously wounded, died shortly afterwards, and their bodies, cut in

pieces, were sent to the towns of Northumberland, where they had found adherents. It was all over with the Percies.

The commotions in France continued to increase. The poor king, Charles VI., would pass from furious madness to docile melancholy; his kingdom, rent asunder by factions, was the scene of the crimes, debaucheries, and exactions of all parties. The Duke of Orleans had recently been assassinated in the Rue Barbette (23rd of November, 1407), by the servants of his cousin, the Duke of Burgundy, a circumstance which had not prevented the latter from reappearing at court, without fearing the punishment of the king for the death of his brother, which he caused to be publicly justified at the Sorbonne, by Maître Jean Petit, doctor in theology. From treason to treason, from reconciliation to reconciliation, the Duke of Burgundy was all powerful in 1409, when the young Duke of Orleans, who had lost his wife, Isabel of France, widow of King Richard II., was married for a second time, to Bonne, the daughter of the wealthy Count of Armagnac. The time had at length arrived for prosecuting revenge: supported by the experience and military talents of the count, the partisans of the House of Orleans assumed the name of Armagnacs; the red scarf was put on by the Duke of Berry, the Duke of Brittany, and the Duke of Alençon; John Sans Peur was driven from Paris, and the Duke of Orleans, sword in hand, demanded justice for the death of his father.

Then, for the first time, amidst the factions which had desolated France for ten years, England was called upon to play a part. John Sans Peur asked assistance of Henry IV. The latter sent in the month of October, 1411, a small body of a thousand archers and eight hundred men-at-arms, with whom the duke marched against Paris. He re-entered there in force on the 23rd, and drove out the Armagnacs, who had already begun to make themselves detested. John Sans Peur followed up his advantages, and hoped to crush his enemies; but they, in their turn, had negotiated with the King of England, promising to recognize him as Duke of Aquitaine, and to assure to him after the death of the present possessors, the counties of Poitou and

Angoulême. As the price of these concessions, the English army was preparing to invade France, under the orders of the third son of the king, the Duke of Clarence, when the Duke of Berry, uncle of Charles VI., filled with horror at the prospect of the evils which the foreigners were about to bring down upon France, once more interposed between the belligerents, and effected one of those reconciliations which prepared the way for fresh acts of perfidy. The Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy entered Paris mounted upon the same horse, and repaired thus to church. The people cried "Noël," and thanked God for this hope of peace. But the Duke of Clarence had landed in Normandy; the news of the pacification had been powerless to arrest him. Maine and Anjou had already been ravaged. The Duke of Orleans contrived to purchase the retreat of the allies whom he himself had summoned: the English, laden with gold and booty, took the road to Guienne, traversing France without any obstacle. "We will return hither," they said as they passed, "to fight with our King Henry." Eight thousand Englishmen embarked at Bordeaux towards the close of the year 1412.

King Henry had nearly arrived at the end of his career. He was ill and sad. His throne had always appeared to him to be tottering; conspiracies had been so often repeated around him, that he had ended by suspecting them where they did not exist. A keen jealousy towards his eldest son troubled him. The Prince of Wales had given proofs of rare courage; when yet young, he had been wounded at the battle of Shrewsbury; being afterwards despatched by his father into Wales, he had there constantly held in check Owen Glendwyr, over whom he had finally triumphed. It is related and, in his admirable tragedy of *Henry IV.*, Shakspeare made use of these accounts, of which the authenticity is not well proved—that the young prince, besides his budding greatness, had given other causes for anxiety to his father: it is said that his debauches and coarse amusements had caused alarm for the fate of the State which he was one day to govern, so that a judge before whom he had been brought, without knowing him, thought it his duty to con-

demn him like a simple private person. Perhaps the jealousy of the father and the restraint which he claimed to impose upon the son, to whom he left neither power nor resources, had contributed to plunge a sanguine, energetic young man, full of life and strength, into those excesses with which he was reproached. It is affirmed that the king had one day swooned, in consequence of one of the attacks of his distemper; he was believed to be dead. The Prince of Wales, entering the apartment, had carried off the crown, which lay upon a cushion. When Henry IV. came to himself again, he asked for the crown. The prince was sent for. "You have no right to it," cried the king. "You know that your father had none." "Your sword gave it to you, sire, and my sword will be able to defend it," replied the prince, exonerating himself as well as he could against the suspicions of his father. He demanded the punishment of those who accused him of prematurely claiming the throne, and the king referred him to the next session of the Parliament. He was weary of reigning and of living. "You shall do as you please," he said; "I have done with all these matters. May the Lord have mercy upon my soul!" But the young Prince Henry suffered in mind from the alienation of his father; he presented himself before him clad in a blue satin robe, covered with button-holes, a tag still hanging from each opening, and, in this strange costume, he threw himself at the feet of the king, drew a dagger from his bosom, and begged him to take his life if he had deprived him of his favour. The father and son became reconciled, it is said, after this scene.

The torments of jealousy, added to the troubles of his conscience and the cares of power, overwhelmed the monarch. He was not yet forty-seven years of age, and the proud Bolingbroke, formerly so handsome, so bold, so adventurous, was bowed down like an old man. He was praying, on the 20th of March, 1413, before the shrine of Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey, when he fell into a swoon. He was carried into the apartment of the abbot, and as he recovered his senses, he asked where he was. "In the Jerusalem Chamber," was the

reply; for such was the name of the chamber to which he had been carried. He closed his eyes. "I was always told that I should die at Jerusalem," he muttered, and he expired. He was interred in Canterbury Cathedral, beside his first wife, Lady Mary de Bohun, the mother of all his children. His



second wife, Queen Joan of Navarre, had not presented any to him.

Ambitious and inflexible, harsh towards his enemies, skilful and cunning as well as enterprising, Henry IV. had always contrived to treat the Parliament with respect, and had never made any attempt against its authority. The House of Commons, especially, had seen its privileges confirmed under his

reign, and its influence had been constantly growing. Thus the liberties of England, formerly conquered by the barons at the price of so much bloodshed, were gradually developing, profiting by the weakness as well as the temerity of the sovereigns, until the day when the religious reform was to raise them to their highest pitch.

Absorbed in the internal struggles consequent upon usurpation, for ever dreading real or supposed conspiracies, Henry IV. had not had leisure to think of foreign wars. The wish, however, had not been wanting; he had everywhere plunged himself into the intrigues and divisions which desolated France under the unhappy Charles VI., and he had thus prepared the return of the great English ambitions, which were destined, for awhile, to raise so high the glory of Henry V., his son, at the price of so much bloodshed and so many sorrows for the two nations.



CHAPTER XIII.

GRANDEUR AND DECLINE.

HENRY V. (1413—1422)—HENRY VI. (1422—1461.)

HENRY of Monmouth ascended the throne under happy auspices. His father had expended the popularity which in the first place had carried him into power, and had lived amidst the anxieties and cares of usurpation; but the work was accomplished, and his son felt his authority so well established, that the first acts of his reign bear testimony to a generous disdain towards conspiracies and rivals. The body of King Richard II. was carried away from the convent of Langley, and solemnly brought back to Westminster, to be interred there beside his wife, Anne of Bohemia, as the unhappy monarch had wished during his lifetime. The king himself was the chief mourner. The young Edmund, earl of March, was restored to liberty, and the son of Hotspur Percy was recalled from the long exile which retained him in Scotland. Everywhere the former adversaries of Henry IV., exiled or punished through his fear and prudence, experienced the clemency of the

young king, who contrived to gain the affection of the greater number of them, by the firmness and energy of character which were united in him with generosity.

Recovered from any follies and excesses which may have sullied his youth, Henry V., when he ascended the throne, showed himself from the first to be austere in his life and in his morals, resolved to fear God, and to cause his laws to be respected. He was not in favour of the religious movement which was being propagated in his kingdom, particularly among the lower classes of society. The doctrines and the preaching of Wickliffe, and the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures which he had begun to diffuse, had borne much good fruit; but the disciples had, upon several points, swerved from the teaching of their master, and from free investigation had sprung up many dangerous errors as well as the most sacred truths. The people designated the reformers under the name of "Lollards," a word, the origin of which is not exactly known, but which very possibly came from the German heretic, Walter Lolhard, burnt at Cologne in 1322. Already, under Henry IV., the secular arm had descended heavily upon the partisans of the new ideas. A priest, formerly rector of Lynn in Norfolk, and who had for awhile abjured his opinions, had asked to be heard by the Parliament, before which he had frankly expounded the doctrines which he had been compelled to abandon. Being declared for this deed a heretic and a relapser, Sacoytre had been burnt at Smithfield in the month of March, 1401, presenting for the first time to the English people the terrible spectacle of a man put to death for his opinions. A tailor, named John Batby, suffered the same punishment in 1410. But at the beginning of the reign of Henry V., the anger and uneasiness of the Church were directed against a personage better known, and of higher rank. The Lollards had become sufficiently numerous to have attributed to them a declaration, placarded by night in London, announcing that a hundred thousand men were ready to defend their rights by arms. All regarded as their chief Sir John Oldcastle, generally

called Lord Cobham, by the right of his wife. He was a good soldier, and the friend of Henry V. in his youth. When Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, came to accuse Lord Cobham before the king, the latter could not decide to deliver him up upon the spot to the Church, and he promised to labour himself to reclaim him; but the king's powers of controversy miscarried before the convictions of Lord Cobham. The monarch became angry, and as his old friend had taken refuge in his manor of Cowling, in Kent, Henry abandoned him to the archbishop. For some time the clever soldier contrived to avoid the delivery of the arrest warrant, but a body of troops sent by the king having surrounded the castle, Oldcastle surrendered, and was conducted to the Tower. For two days he defended himself unaided against all the clergy assembled, he was then condemned to the stake; but the king, who still retained some affection for him, obtained a respite, during which Sir John contrived to escape from the Tower. He no longer hoped to live in peace: perhaps he reckoned upon the devotion of his brethren. It is related that he assembled a considerable number of Lollards, and that he made an attempt to surprise the king; having failed in his design, he had convoked his partisans in the fields of St. Giles, near London, on the morrow of the Epiphany. The king was forewarned of the conspiracy and repaired thither. Sir John was not there; a hundred men at the utmost had assembled in the meadow; they carried arms, and confessed that they were waiting for Oldcastle. Two or three other little assemblages were also captured, and, on the 13th of January, thirty Lollards suffered at St. Giles's the punishment of traitors. The Parliament was agitated, and the State was believed to be in danger; the judges and magistrates were authorized to arrest every individual suspected of heresy, and made oath to prosecute the guilty in all parts. Death and confiscation were decreed against them. Sir Roger Acton, a friend of Oldcastle, was arrested, quartered, and hanged on the 10th of February. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Arundel, died on the 28th of the same

month; but his successor, Chicheley, was no less ardent than he against heresy, and it was at his request and at his suit that Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, after having for a long while remained concealed, was rearrested in 1417, and burnt at a slow fire in the meadow of St. Giles, on the 25th of December following.

The terror which the Lollards had caused was beginning to subside. The king had had leisure to reflect upon the sad condition of France; the weakness in which it was plunged reminded him of the counsels of his dying father. It is said that Henry IV. had advised his son to engage his country in a great war, to divert it from conspiracies. The ardour of the young king had become inflamed at this idea, and he had come to look upon himself as the messenger of God, sent to punish the crimes of the French princes, and to deliver from their hands the kingdom which they were oppressing. In the month of July, 1414, he suddenly laid claim to the crown of France, as the descendant of Isabel, the daughter of Philip the Fair. This pretension, groundless on the part of Edward III., became absurd in the mouth of Henry V., because the right of succession if transmissible by females, belonged to the Earl of March. The Duke of Berry, then in power, peremptorily repelled the demand of King Henry, who thereupon proclaimed other pretensions. He consented to leave the throne to King Charles, but he claimed for England the absolute sovereignty of Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Aquitaine, besides the towns and territories ceded in other parts of France by the treaty of Brétigny. He claimed at the same time one half of Provence, the inheritance of Eleanor and Sanche, the wives of Henry III., and of his brother, the Duke of Cornwall; and the fifteen hundred thousand crowns remaining to be paid upon the ransom of King John; finally, he formally demanded the hand of the Princess Catherine, the daughter of King Charles VI., with a dowry of two millions of crowns. In reply to these exorbitant demands, the Duke of Berry proposed to surrender Aquitaine to the King of England, and to give him the Princess Catherine,

with a dowry of six hundred thousand crowns. Never had a daughter of France brought so large a dowry to her husband, and the payment of it would probably have been difficult in the state of poverty which the country was in. King Henry thereupon recalled his ambassadors, convoked the Parliament, and, having obtained large subsidies, he sent a second mission to the court of France. The Earl of Dorset entered Paris with a magnificent retinue. He proposed a prolongation of the truce for four months, and consented to receive the princess with a dowry of one million of crowns only. Henry had besides renounced his pretensions to Maine, Anjou, and Normandy. The answer was the same, but two hundred thousand crowns were added to the dowry of Catherine. The ambassadors started back for England in March, 1415; the preparations for war immediately commenced.

The situation of France was more than ever deplorable. The Armagnacs and the Burgundians were contending with each other for the power, and a third competitor had entered the lists; the dauphin, Louis, the eldest son of the unhappy Charles VI., arrived at manhood, and supported by his uncle, the Duke of Berry, endeavoured to seize the reins of government. Dissolute and unmannerly, as profligate and as cruel as his adversaries, he sometimes made use of the king's name, at others he declared him incapable of directing his affairs, and plotted to drive out the Armagnacs or the Burgundians. Blood flowed in all parts, and the unhappy populations of the towns and the country, exhausted by taxes and exactions, sighed after each abuse of a new master: "What worse could the English do than that from which we suffer?"

While the French nation, overwhelmed by its misfortunes, lost even the wish of defending itself against foreigners, King Henry had summoned a council of the Lords at Westminster. In the last Parliament, his uncle, Beaufort, bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England, had delivered a great speech upon this text: "While we have time, let us do every good work." The king announced to his councillors that he had resolved to

put his hand to the task and to recover his inheritance. All the prelates and barons approved of his intentions, and his brother John, duke of Bedford, was nominated Regent of England in his absence. The conditions of military service were determined. The king undertook to make a regular payment, curiously graduated according to the rank of those who followed him; a duke was to receive every day thirteen shillings and fourpence; an earl, six shillings and eightpence; a baron, four shillings; a knight, two shillings, an esquire, one shilling, and an archer sixpence. All were to bring a certain number of horses, which the king undertook to equip. Henry had pawned his jewels, contracted loans, and he had collected a very considerable sum of money, when he marched forth in the month of July, to embark at Southampton.

At Winchester, the king encountered the Archbishop of Bourges, sent by the Duke of Berry, in the frivolous hope of appeasing the storm which threatened France. "I have a right to the crown," said Henry, "and I will conquer it with my sword." In vain did the archbishop invoke the help of God, of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints, who would defend the just cause of King Charles; in vain, exasperated by the disdain of the English, did he exclaim that the king had only made such liberal offers for love of peace, and that King Henry would soon find himself repulsed as far as the sea, if he should not be killed or made a prisoner; Henry contented himself with smiling. "We shall see shortly," said he; and loading the prelate and his retinue with presents, he sent him back with no other reply.

The embarkation of the troops had already commenced, when the king was suddenly warned of a plot hatched against his life. One of his friends, Lord Scroop of Masham, in whom the king reposed such confidence, that he always made him sleep in his own chamber, and Sir Thomas Grey Heton, had made an agreement with the Earl of Cambridge, the brother of the Duke of York, and as treacherous as he. The king dead, the young Earl of March was to replace him upon the throne. The three conspirators had suffered the penalty of their crime, when

Henry at length set sail for France, on the 13th of August, 1415.

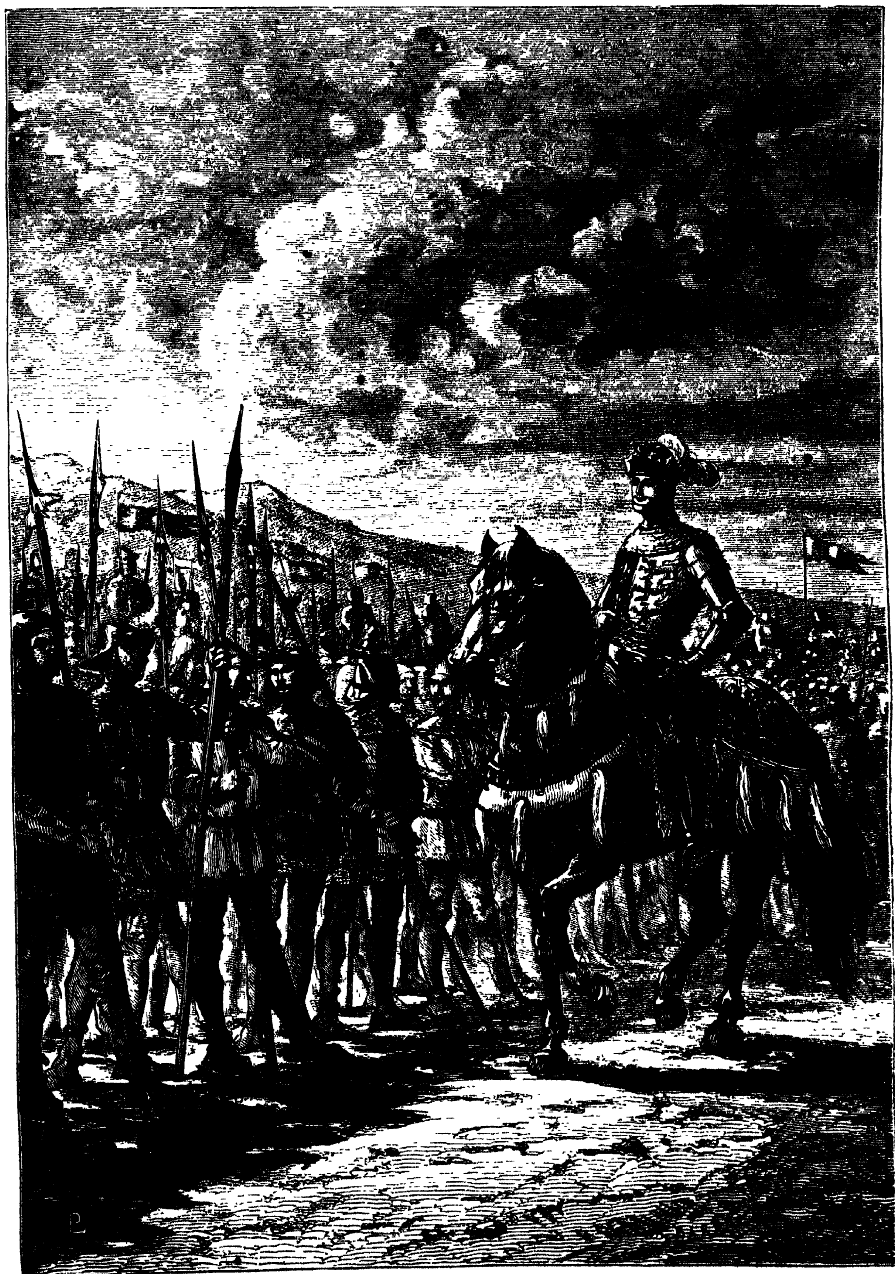
The fleet entered the Seine on the morning of the 14th of August, and thirty thousand men, which it carried, landed within a league of Harfleur. The spot was ill-chosen for the landing, and the defence would have been easy; but no obstacle presented itself to impede the operations of the English, and, on the 17th, King Henry laid siege to Harfleur. The town was strong and well defended by the Sire d'Estouteville; sickness was beginning to ravage the English army; several barons of consequence were dead, as well as a large number of soldiers; but the besieged suffered also, and the governor in vain asked for assistance.

The Sire d'Estouteville formed his resolution; he issued secretly out of the town and repaired in person to Rouen, where the French forces were beginning to assemble. But confusion and disorder reigned there; no one thought of delivering Harfleur. The brave governor returned, re-entered the town, and surrendered it on the 22nd of September, after a siege which had lasted thirty-six days. King Henry installed a garrison there; he embarked his sick and wounded soldiers, whom he sent back to England, and when he took account of his army thus diminished, nine thousand men at the utmost remained under his banners. His supporters hesitated to advance into France. Henry had sent to the dauphin a challenge to single combat; but Louis had not even replied. The king silenced the timid counsels. "No," said he, "with the help of God, we must first see a little more of this good soil of France, which all belongs to us. We will go, with God's help, without hurt or danger; but if we should be interfered with, we will fight, and the victory will be ours." Reassuring his men thus, the King of England set out on his way to Calais, on the 6th of October. The army at Rouen, under the orders of the king and the dauphin, did not stir; but that of the constable had preceded the English in Picardy, and every day troops passed by to go and join him. Watched by some detachments larger than

his entire army, Henry traversed Normandy without any obstacle; near Dieppe, however, he was attacked by the garrison of Eu, but the enemy was thrown back in disorder. Like Edward III., Henry found himself stopped by the river Somme, and could not discover a ford; Blanche Tache was guarded; the greater number of the passages were furnished with stakes. The soldiers were beginning to murmur, when, on the 19th of October, a passage was found between Bethencourt and Vogenme, and the English army crossed the Somme without impediment. The constable had established himself at Abbeville; the military council assembled at Rouen decided that battle should be given. The immense superiority of the French army had caused the wise usages of King Charles V. to be forgotten.

On the 20th of October, three French heralds presented themselves at the camp of the enemy, and the Duke of York conducted them to the king. "Sire," they said, bending their knee before him, "my masters, the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, and my lord the Constable, inform you that they intend to give battle to you." "God's will be done," replied the king without emotion. "And by which road do you intend to proceed?" resumed the heralds, who had noticed with amazement the small number of English tents, and the weary appearance of the soldiers. "That of Calais, straight along," replied Henry. "If my enemies wish to stop me, it will be at their peril. I do not seek them, but I will proceed neither faster nor more slowly to avoid them." And raising his camp on the morrow, Henry indeed continued his march, as though death or defeat could not lie hidden behind each hill, or await him in the neighbouring plains. On the 24th he had crossed the river of Ternois, when he perceived the first columns of the enemy. He immediately formed his troops into battle order; but the constable had fallen back upon Agincourt, and the King of England took up his quarters in the village of Maisoncelles. The royal standard of France was planted on the road to Calais; death or victory was imperative.

King Henry had sent his marshals to reconnoitre the position of the French. They brought back alarming particulars as to



THE CROWN WHICH SURMOUNTED HIS HELMET SPARKLED IN THE RAYS OF THE SUN.

their strength, and the number of pennants and banners spread out in the wind; the soldiers were laughing around some fires, and the spies heard them calculating the ransom of the English barons. The veteran knights alone appeared less joyful; the Duke of Berry, who, when quite a child, had fought at Poictiers, had opposed with all his might the project of giving battle. He had succeeded in preventing the arrival of the king. "It is better," he said, remembering the captivity of his father, King John, "to lose the battle than to lose both the king and the battle." The English trumpets sounded throughout the night; but the soldiers had confessed, many of them had made their wills; they appreciated all the danger that threatened them.

At daybreak, on the 25th of October, the king attended mass. Three altars had been erected in the camp, in order that the soldiers might all be present at divine worship. The English were composed of three divisions; two detachments were stationed at the wings. The archers, placed in the form of a quoin in front of the men-at-arms, drove into the ground long stakes, intended to protect them against the charge of the cavalry; for the first time, the points of the stakes were furnished with iron. The baggage, the priests, and the greater number of the horses had remained in the rear-guard, near Maisoncelles. The king rode slowly along the lines upon his little grey horse; the crown which surmounted his helmet sparkled in the rays of the sun, but the youthful and handsome countenance of the young sovereign above all attracted the attention of his soldiers. "My course is taken," he said, "to conquer or die here. Never shall England pay a ransom for me. Remember, Soissons,[1] my archers; the French have sworn to cut off three fingers from the right hand of every one of you, so that you may never be able to shoot an arrow again in your lives. We have not come to our kingdom of France like enemies; we have not sacked the towns and insulted the women; they are full of sin and have not the fear of God

[1] Two hundred English archers, prisoners of war, had been hanged at Soissons.

before their eyes." A gallant warrior, Walter Hungerford, said aloud, as the king passed by, that he would like to see at his side a few of the good knights who remained idle in England. "No," cried Henry, "I would not have here one man more. If God give us the victory, the fewer we are, the greater will be the honour; if we fail, the country will be less unhappy." And he smiled, like a man certain of victory.

The French did not make an attack. By the advice of the old Duke of Berry, they had resolved to await the onslaught, and they had seated themselves upon the ground, like the English at Crecy. Henry had reckoned upon the confusion and disorder which every movement would bring upon this compact and confused mass, where each knight obeyed his liege lord, without concerning himself about the general direction, and he hesitated to make an attack. The constable wished to wait for the Duke of Brittany, who was to bring fresh reinforcements to him; and, seeing that the English remained stationary, he despatched Messire Guichard Dauphin to King Henry, to offer him a free passage, if he would surrender Harfleur and renounce his pretensions to the crown of France. Henry refused without hesitation; he was willing to negotiate, he said, upon the conditions which he had offered from London. They could delay no longer; the English army was destitute of victuals. The king gave orders to his two detachments to creep, one to the left and the other to the rear of the French army; he then in a ringing voice cried, "Advance, banners!" It was mid-day. Sir Thomas Erpingham, the venerable commander of the archers, threw into the air his white staff, saying, "Shoot." The English had advanced within bowshot; they planted their stakes, and, uttering their battle cries, began to shoot. Their comrades, hidden upon the left flank of the French, answered them with cries and with arrows. Messire Clignet de Brabant charged at the archers, crying, "Montjoie! Saint Denis!" The ground was soft and moist with the rain; the horses slipped and fell; the horsemen were wounded by the arrows, and their lances could not reach, behind the ramparts of stakes, the bare breasts

of the archers, who had nearly all thrown off a portion of their clothing, to fight more at their ease. The Brabantines were compelled to retire in disorder, breaking up at their rear the advancing ranks. The mass was so confused and the ranks so serried that neither horses nor men had room to move. The English archers had drawn their stakes, and, having discontinued shooting, charged mallet and battle-axe in hand. The French cavalry had made a side movement; the horses sank into the freshly ploughed soil; the cavalry, heavily armed, had difficulty in dismounting, while their enemies ran lightly upon the yielding ground. The constable had been slain; the Duke Anthony of Brabant succumbed beneath a battle-axe, at the moment when the second French division attacked the English men-at-arms who were advancing in their turn. The struggle then began between the cavalry. The Duke of Clarence had been overthrown; Henry, standing before his body, defended him single-handed. Eighteen knights, bearing the banner of the Count of Croy, attacked him at the same moment; they had sworn to capture the King of England dead or alive. A blow from a battle-axe caused the knees of Henry to bend; he was about to perish, but his knights had rejoined him; the king rose, and the eighteen assailants were killed. The Duke of Alençon, sword in hand, had arrived at the foot of the standard of England; he had overthrown the Duke of York. King Henry defended his treacherous relative, and the battle-axe of the French prince smashed a half of the crown which surmounted his helmet. At the same moment the duke was surrounded. "I surrender," he cried. "I am the Duke of Alençon." But already the blows of the English had stretched him upon the ground; when King Henry wished to receive his gage, he was dead. The French troops faltered; the chiefs were either captured or slain. The third division began to fly; the ground gave under their feet; the horses sank into the mud. A great tumult arose in the rear of the English. The third division of the enemy began to rally; the Duke of Brittany was hourly expected with numerous reinforcements: King Henry gave orders to kill the prisoners with

whom each Englishman was encumbered; the greatest names of France were falling beneath the dagger. But the alarm subsided; the peasants who had made a raid upon the baggage had been repulsed, the French cavalry had resumed their gallop; the King of England arrested the slaughter, and gave orders to raise the wounded. The day was ended; the king rode over the field of battle with his barons; the heralds examined the arms of the dead knights. Henry encountered Montjoie, the French king-at-arms, who had been made a prisoner. "This butchery is not of our doing," he said, "but of the Almighty, who wished to punish the sins of France. To whom falls the honour of the victory?" "To the King of England," gravely replied Montjoie. "What is the name of this castle?" resumed the king. "Agincourt." "The day's work shall then be called the battle of Agincourt," said Henry, and he resumed his march amidst the dead and the dying. Eight thousand gentlemen had fallen upon the field of battle, of whom were one hundred and twenty great noblemen bearing banners. The Duke of Orleans, the Count of Richemont, Marshal Boucicault, the Duke of Bourbon, the Counts of Eu and Vendôme, were prisoners. Amongst the English the Earl of Suffolk and the Duke of York had been killed.

The king retook the road to Calais, the young Count of Charolais, the son of the Duke of Burgundy, whom his father had forbidden to take part in the combat, had performed the last duties towards his uncles, the Duke of Brabant and the Count of Nevers. At the same time, he caused to be interred at his own expense, all those whose friends had not come to take away their bodies. Nearly six thousand men were deposited in the cemetery improvised upon the field of battle, and the Bishop of Guînes performed the last prayers there.

The King of England had merely passed through Calais, and had returned into his kingdom, laden with booty, amidst the cries of joy of his subjects, who had thrown themselves into the sea on his arrival, and had borne him to land upon their shoulders. In its gratitude, the Parliament had granted to him, for his lifetime, the subsidy upon woollens and leathers, which it

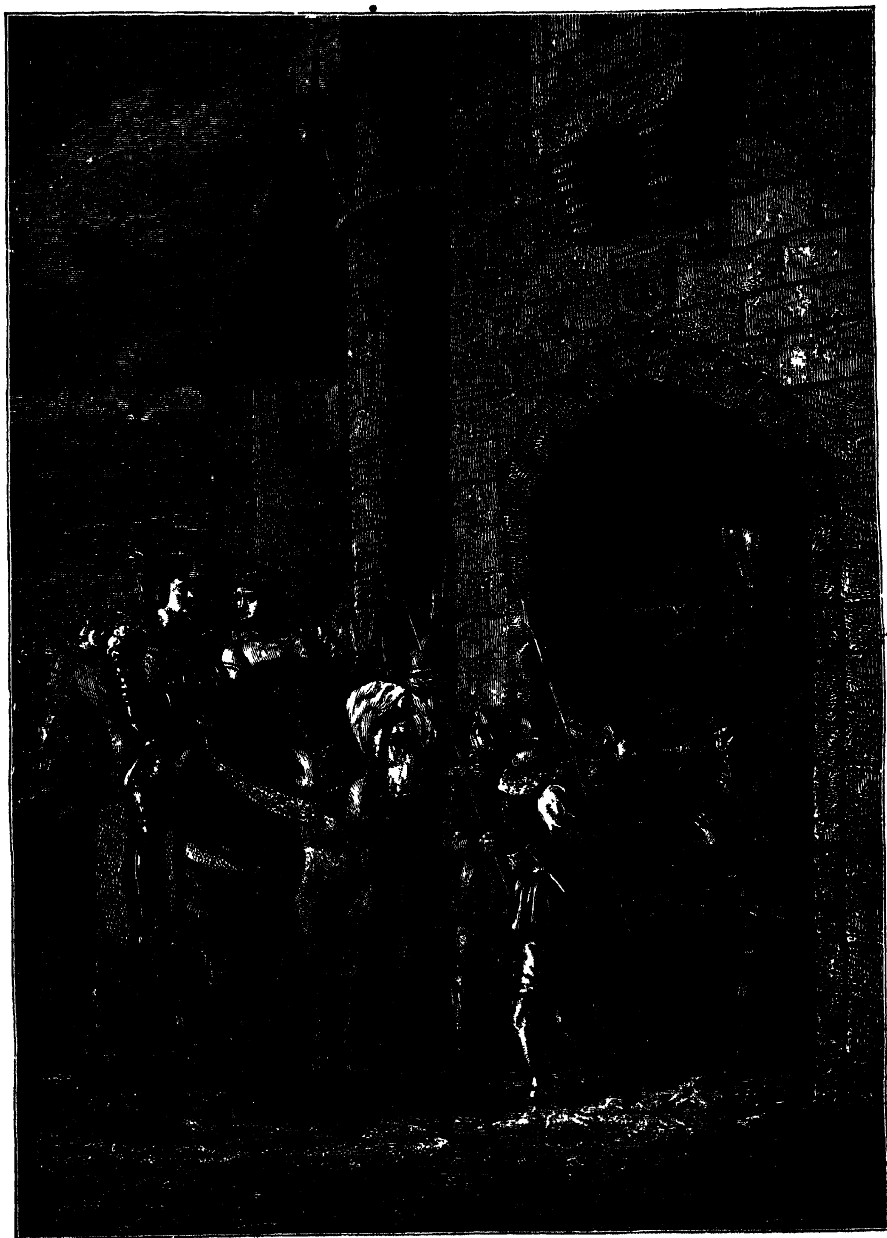
had formerly so bitterly regretted presenting to King Richard. Henry V. was too much occupied by his foreign ventures, and he was naturally too just and too generous to abuse the favours of his people. During the whole course of his reign he lived in peace and in mutual understanding with his Parliament.

The King of England was occupied in receiving with magnificence the Emperor Sigismund, who was travelling, like a knight errant, from kingdom to kingdom, endeavouring to effect the cessation of the schism which was desolating the Church, by causing the anti-popes to abdicate, to restore to Christianity a universally recognized chief, when, in the month of August, 1416, came the news that Harfleur was closely pressed by a body of French troops. The king was ready to embark; but Sigismund dissuaded him, under the pretext that this enterprise was not worthy of so great a prince, and the Duke of Bedford was entrusted to deliver the garrison of Harfleur. He found a pretty considerable fleet, reinforced by some Genoese and Spaniards, which awaited him at the mouth of the Seine, and on the 15th of August he was attacked by the French, who were soon defeated; but the Genoese caracks rose so high above the water, that the English sailors were compelled to climb up like cats to board them: they succeeded, however, for "at sea," says the old chronicler, "neither those who attack, nor those who defend have any place of refuge or means of escape, and the combat is therefore more desperate." The French fleet was destroyed, and the land forces were retreating in disorder; but the sea was covered with dead bodies, which came floating around the vessels, and the sight was still lugubrious when the Duke of Bedford returned to England, leaving Harfleur revictualled and in a good state of defence.

The Emperor Sigismund had accompanied his royal host to a conference, at Calais, whither the Duke of Burgundy, who began to incline towards the English, had repaired. The Count of Armagnac was all-powerful in Paris, and King Henry was preparing a large army to attempt a fresh invasion of France.

The Dauphin Louis was dead, poisoned, it was said, by the Armagnacs, who dreaded the influence of his father-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy, over him. Prince John, who had become dauphin, had been accompanied to Compiègne by his brother-in-law, the Count of Hainault. He was quite a Burgundian, and did not long survive his elevation. "At the beginning of 1417," wrote the Duke of Burgundy, "our much dreaded lord and nephew was stricken one evening with so severe an illness that he died immediately; his lips, tongue, and face all swollen, which was a piteous sight, for like this are persons who are poisoned." The new dauphin, Charles, was but sixteen years of age; he belonged to the Armagnacs, who had caused Queen Isabel to be seized in the castle of Vincennes, and had imprisoned her at Tours. She had thereupon entered into relations with the Duke of Burgundy, whose partisans had been driven in a mass from Paris. The English disembarked at the same time at Touques, in Normandy.

From this period, and for twenty years, the history of England takes place in France. Absorbed at first in their conquests, then in the attempt to preserve them, the English princes asked nothing of their native country but men and money. The towns of Normandy fell one after another into the power of King Henry: Caen was taken by storm; Lisieux, Bayeux, Laigle, had been abandoned by the population, who had taken refuge in Brittany. Nothing arrested his triumphal march. In vain did the French deputies endeavour to negotiate; Henry demanded the hand of the Princess Catherine, and only consented to leave the royal title to Charles VI. on condition of governing during his lifetime as regent, and having possession of the crown after his death. The winter had arrived and the Scots had attempted an incursion into the Northern counties; but Bedford had repulsed them. In the beginning of the spring (1418), King Henry resumed his military operations. Large reinforcements had arrived from England; Cherbourg, Domfront, Louviers, Pont-de-l'Arche, besieged by large detachments, surrendered almost at the same time. The whole of



ONE OF THE GATES OF THE CITY WAS SECRETLY OPENED.

Lower Normandy was in the hands of the conqueror, who established his government there. The salt tax was abolished, and the chancellor of the duchy was entrusted to govern with strict justice. On the 30th of July, the King of England laid siege to Rouen.

Meanwhile Paris was more than ever a prey to the flames and to bloodshed. The Duke of Burgundy had released Queen Isabel, who had declared herself regent of the kingdom, without concerning herself about the rights of her son. She was advancing against Paris, which trembled under the Count of Armagnac. "In those days, it was sufficient in Paris to say that a man was a Burgundian for him to be dead," say the chronicles. The population began to weary of this sanguinary yoke. In the night of the 23rd of May, 1418, one of the gates of the city was secretly opened to a small body of Burgundians, by Perrinet Leclerc, the son of a civil guard. The Sire of Isle-Adam, who commanded the detachment, hastened to the Hôtel St. Pol; the dauphin had already been dragged as far as the Bastille by Tanneguy-Duchâtel, a Breton knight and an ardent Armagnac. The constable had concealed himself; the poor king, awakened with a start, recognized Isle-Adam. "How is my cousin of Burgundy?" he said courteously. "It is a very long time since I have seen him." The populace of Paris had risen and were rushing upon the Armagnacs; the king was placed on horseback and conducted through the streets of Paris. The constable had been discovered, and thrown into prison with his partisans; but on the 12th of June a cry was raised that the enemy were at the gates: the people ran to the prisons, the captives were dragged into the yards, and immediately slaughtered, notwithstanding some efforts of the Burgundian knights. Nearly five thousand persons perished in this massacre, which lasted several days. Tanneguy-Duchâtel had conducted the dauphin to Bourges, when the Duke of Burgundy and the queen entered Paris in triumph. The two parties endeavoured to negotiate with King Henry, who listened to them and rejected their proposals one by one: he had come to

persuade himself that he was the avenger sent by God. "He has conducted me hither by the hand to punish the sins of the land and to reign as a true king," he replied to the solicitations of the Papal Legate in favour of peace. "There is neither law nor sovereign in France, none thinks of resisting me; I will maintain my just rights and will place the crown upon my head. It is the will of God."

Meanwhile the siege of Rouen still continued. From every captured town and every abandoned castle, the best combatants had taken refuge in the capital of Normandy. The citizens thereof had always been valiant and passionately attached to independence. Henry in vain repeated to them that he was of Norman race, a descendant of Rollo and William the Conqueror; the Rouennais kept their gates closed, fighting valiantly upon the ramparts, and making frequent sorties. Hunger, however, began to make itself felt; an old priest left the city secretly and repaired to Paris to ask for assistance. He addressed himself to Maître Pavilly, the greatest doctor and preacher of the Sorbonne, beseeching him to preach a sermon in favour of the unfortunate besieged of Rouen. The eloquence of Maître Pavilly moved all his auditors to tears. "I have come to raise the hue and cry," said the old priest. Assistance was promised to him, but days elapsed and nobody came. The dogs and cats were eaten; the besieged caused a capitulation to be proposed to King Henry. "In your present state," replied the conqueror, "I intend to see you at my mercy." When Messire Le Bouteiller, the governor of the city, received this answer: he no longer took any counsel but that of despair. "Let us set fire to the houses," he said, "and arm ourselves as well as we are able, with the women and children in our midst; we will thus make a breach in the wall, which is ruined, and will throw ourselves upon the camp of the English, to go where we can." The rumour of this resolve reached the ears of King Henry. He was harsh, and urged on his projects without concerning himself much about human sufferings; but he was unwilling to see Rouen reduced to ashes; he promised to the men-at-arms

their life and liberty, on condition of not fighting against him for one year. The citizens retained their property and their liberties, by paying a fine of three hundred thousand crowns. The king entered Rouen on the 16th of January, 1419, amidst the dead bodies with which the streets were strewn: fifty thousand persons, it was said, had perished in the city during the siege.

The consternation was great in France, when it was learnt that Rouen had succumbed. The Duke of Burgundy quitted Paris with the king and queen, and negotiations were again entered into with the King of England. The conditions offered by the Duke of Burgundy were so advantageous that Henry consented to negotiate in person. The plain of the environs of Meulan was chosen for the interview; the court of France was at Pontoise, and the King of England had established himself at Mantes. On the 30th of May, two magnificent retinues appeared in the field, around whom a crowd of people thronged; silken tents had been erected. For the first time Henry saw that Princess Catherine with whom he had been smitten through a portrait, and whom he had chosen for the lady of his thoughts. Tall, slim, fair, with black eyes, the beauty of the princess made a lively impression upon her knight, but without disturbing for a moment the policy of the king. Interviews succeeded each other, but Henry abated nothing of his pretensions. "Good cousin of Burgundy," said he, "I will have the daughter of your king for my wife, and with her all that I have demanded." But when the King of England presented himself for the eighth conference, the French tents were deserted. A treaty had been concluded between the Duke of Burgundy and the dauphin, who had embraced upon the road between Melun and Corbeil; the two parties were for the moment reunited against the English. King Henry, indignant at this treachery, and swearing to avenge himself unaided, advanced as far as Pontoise, which was taken on the 27th of July. Isle-Adam who defended the town, was compelled to fly, leaving behind him the treasure which he had amassed in Paris by hanging the Armagnacs.

The Duke of Burgundy was at Saint-Denis; but he made no effort to defend Pontoise. Paris remained undefended; nobody thought any longer of taking possession of that unhappy city, the scene of so many horrors and crimes. There was uneasiness around the King of England; the negotiations which were on foot between the court of France and the Regent of Scotland were known; the King of Castile had armed a large fleet which ravaged the coasts of Guienne. Henry V. alone had not lost confidence: he counted upon the justice of God as well as upon the internal treachery of his adversaries · the event proved that he had not been mistaken. Since his reconciliation with the dauphin, the Duke of Burgundy strongly urged the latter to repair to Troyes, where were the king and queen; the young prince, or rather his councillors, insisted upon a preliminary interview at Montereau. The duke hesitated; he had received several warnings of the evil designs of Tanneguy-Duchâtel. But the influence of a woman, the Dame de Giac, gained over by the Armagnacs, decided him to risk all, and he started for Montereau. Tanneguy-Duchâtel came forward to meet him; the servants of the duke still insisted to make him retreat. "No," said he, "if I die, it will be as a martyr, and the councillors of my lord the dauphin are good knights." Then, as Duchâtel entered, "This is what I rely upon" he said, resting his hand upon his shoulder; "Messire Tanneguy answers for my safety." The Armagnac reiterated protestations, while leading the duke towards the pavilion which had been prepared upon the bridge. Barriers closed it upon both sides; they were carefully thrown down as soon as the duke had entered. He uncovered his head and placed one knee upon the ground before the dauphin, who leant against the balustrade in the centre of the pavilion. The young prince scarcely answered, muttering some reproaches. At the same moment, upon a movement of John Sans Peur which caused his sword to clatter, Tanneguy cried, "A sword before my Lord," and struck the duke a blow upon the head with his battle-axe. The Sire de Navailles, raised his arm to defend his master; but the Vis-

count of Narbonne sprang upon him. The duke had been thrown down without having been able to draw his sword; two noblemen raised his coat of mail and plunged their daggers in his breast; the Burgundians of the retinue were made prisoners; two of them were seriously wounded. The troops of the dauphin had scattered the escort; the young prince had retired; John Sans Peur remained upon the bridge, lifeless, and divested of his jewels and his rich habiliments. This bold and cunning heart, this egotistical ambition which nothing arrested, this magnificent life of pleasures and politics, all had been ended by a crime, and the public indignation enumerated the qualities of the duke without recalling his vices; the death of John Sans Peur opened a wide entrance for the English in France.

Philip, count of Charolais, now Duke of Burgundy, was at Ghent, when he learnt of the assassination of his father. "Michelle," he said, turning towards his wife, the daughter of Charles VI., "your brother has killed my father." Amidst deputations which arrived from all parts to deplore the crime, and to throw the responsibility of it upon the Dauphin, the first care of the new duke was to enter into negotiations with the King of England.

Anger and vengeance were about to give to Henry all that his victories had not yet been able to wrest from the weakness of France. The proposals of the dauphin had been rejected; but when the young Duke of Burgundy was entrusted to negotiate by Queen Isabel, the king entered into parleys; the hand of the Princess Catherine was promised to him, with the regency of the kingdom, and the crown at the death of Charles VI. He consented, in his turn, to renounce the title of King of France during the lifetime of King Charles, to govern his new kingdom upon the advice of a French council, to respect the liberties of the Parliaments and towns, and to reannex Normandy to the crown of France on his accession to the throne. A private treaty assured certain favours to the Duke of Burgundy. Neither of these documents contained the clause which had led to their conclusion; but it was understood that the dauphin should be

pursued to the death, and driven from his inheritance by the English arms.

The Duke of Burgundy had assured himself of his revenge; he returned to Troyes; all the constituent bodies had already reassembled at Paris,—the Parliament, the Chamber of Accounts, the University,—and all had approved of the treaty with the English. The great qualities of King Henry were enumerated; prudent and wise, loving peace and justice, maintaining a strict discipline among warriors, protecting the poor people, resigned to the will of God, praising Him in good fortune and accepting bad fortune without anger. It was added that he was of noble bearing and of an agreeable countenance. None objected; people were weary of the civil wars, misery had exhausted their hearts and benumbed their courage; the Duke of Burgundy was all-powerful. A few noblemen alone dared to complain; the Duke Philip had great difficulty in making John of Luxemburg and the Bishop of Thérouenne, his brother, to swear peace. "You wish it," they said, "we will therefore take the oath, and also will we keep it until death." Others formally refused, and, in the duchy of Burgundy, all the towns at first resisted the oath of fidelity required by the King of England. "Those who looked displeased," says Juvenal des Ursins, "were treated as Armagnacs, but they were only good and loyal Frenchmen." The treaty of Troyes was the disgrace of France.

King Henry arrived at the court on the 20th of May, followed by the flower of his army, upon which he had imposed a severe discipline; in traversing the country, he had everywhere required the soldiers to put water in their wine. The Princess Catherine was awaiting her chevalier, who was affianced to her with great ceremony, and on the morrow the treaty was signed. The King of England, regent of France, had received the oaths of his new subjects, when his marriage was celebrated on the 2nd of June, by the Archbishop of Sens, amidst the most brilliant ceremonies. The young knights and gallants hoped for a joust and some passages of arms on the occasion of this great union; but Henry was not so full of love as to forget his affairs. "I beg my lord the

king," he said, "for permission, and I command his servants as well as my own be in readiness to-morrow morning to proceed to lay siege to the city of Sens, where are the enemies of the king. There each of us will be able to joust, tourney, and display his prowess and courage, for there is no finer prowess than to mete out justice to the wicked in order that the poor people may live." The court of Queen Isabel was not accustomed to this serious and firm language, but they set out without complaining for Sens. The town was taken at the end of two days; the king caused the archbishop to be called, and conducted him to the church. "You have given me a bride, and I restore yours to you," he said to the prelate.

From Sens the army went to Montereau; the Burgundians were fighting furiously, eager to have possession of the spot in which the body of their duke reposed. The garrison had been compelled to retire within the castle, where the Sire de Guitry defended himself yet for some time. Scarcely had Philip of Burgundy entered the town, when the women conducted him to the church wherein his father had been hurriedly interred. He caused the tomb to be opened; the body was riddled with wounds, disfigured by the blows of the battle-axe of Tanneguy-Duchâtel; all wept while looking at him; the body was transported to Dijon with the greatest honours, and deposited in the tomb of Philip the Bold. The bastard De Croy, killed during the siege, took, in the church of Montereau, the place which the Duke John left empty.

The army had repaired to Melun; but the town was defended by the Sire de Barbazan, one of the dauphin's most gallant knights. The siege might have been protracted; the court came and established itself at Corbeil. Every day the besieged made sorties; an assault had been attempted without success; mines were defeated by counter-mines; the English, Burgundian, and French knights sometimes took pleasure in breaking lances in those dark galleries; the Sire de Barbazan there had the honour of encountering the King of England without knowing him; but the combats of the men-at-

arms were more serious, and the knights sometimes took part in them. "You do not know what it is to fight in a mine," said De Barbazan to the young Louis des Ursins, who was preparing to descend there; "have the handle of your battle-axe cut down; the passages in the mines are often narrow and zigzagged; short sticks are necessary for fighting hand to hand."

Meanwhile the people suffered cruelly within the town, and the dauphin could not succour it: the English and Burgundian forces would have crushed his little army. The besieged still held out. King Henry had in vain caused Charles VI. to be brought to the camp; De Barbazan replied that he would open the gates to him willingly, but not to the mortal enemies of France. Already the English and the Burgundians began to quarrel among themselves: the French noblemen complained of the small court and the shabby costume of their king, while the King of England had a gorgeous establishment. Henry, besides, feeling himself surrounded by scarcely subjected enemies, and little accustomed to all the delicate shades of French courtesy, treated the barons with less consideration than they were wont to encounter. The Marshal of Isle-Adam, who was in command at Joigny, had come to Sens for some matters of business. "Is that the dress of a marshal of France?" asked King Henry, while surveying him from head to foot. "Sire," replied the marshal, "I had this light grey robe made to come here by water." "What!" cried the king, "do you look a prince in the face in speaking to him?" "Sire," and the Burgundian drew himself up, "in France it is the custom when one man speaks to another, of whatever rank, or whatever power he may be, that he pass for a bad man of little honour if he does not dare to look him in the face." "It is not our fashion," muttered Henry, and shortly afterwards Isle-Adam was deprived of his command.

Melun had at length been reduced to capitulate, on the 18th of November, and the King of England made his entry into Paris. That city was a prey to the most frightful misery;

little children were abandoned and died of hunger and of cold in the streets; wolves entered the cemeteries and even into the streets, to devour the dead bodies which none took the trouble to inter. Notwithstanding the distress, all Paris was holiday-making for the arrival of the two kings; the poor Charles VI. rode beside his son-in-law, who vied with him in courtesy at the doors of the churches when the relics were presented to them to kiss; the Duke of Burgundy, clad in mourning, as well as all his household, followed the King of France; the Dukes of Clarence and Bedford accompanied their brother. The misery was redoubled within Paris after the magnificences of the royal reception. Henry established himself at the Louvre, where he held his court sumptuously; the old king had re-entered the Hôtel St. Paul, and few people repaired thither to him, to wish him a happy Christmas.

The Duke of Burgundy had formally demanded justice for the death of his father, and the murderers had been condemned by a decree of Charles VI., without giving the names and without personally accusing the dauphin. The King of England was in need of money, and, entrusting the command of his army to the Duke of Clarence, after having provided for the principal offices of the kingdom by men who were devoted to him, he set sail for England, notwithstanding the severity of the weather. He landed at Dover, in the middle of January, to the sound of the acclamations of his people. The royal retinue resembled a triumph when it entered London. Catherine was crowned at Westminster, "with such great pomp and feasting and jollity, that since the time of the very noble and very warlike King Artus was not seen in the city of London a similar rejoicing for any English king," says Monstrelet. The sovereigns had commenced a journey in their states when, at York, the king learnt the sad news of the death of his well-beloved brother, the Duke of Clarence, slain in the combat of Baugé. He was ravaging Anjou, which still recognized the authority of the dauphin. The Seigneur de la Fayette had raised a few troops to resist him, and a numerous body of Scottish auxiliaries had

come and joined him under the orders of the Earl of Buchan. Clarence did not know with what enemies he had to deal; he had imprudently advanced, had been killed by Lord Buchan, and a great number of English had remained upon the field. The dauphin had nominated the Earl of Buchan Constable of France.

Negotiations were then in progress for the release of King James of Scotland, so long a prisoner at the court of England; King Henry caused him to come, and, his face flashing with rage, "Forbid all your subjects ever to lend assistance against me to the dauphin," he said. "I should make a sorry figure by giving orders, being a prisoner," firmly replied James; "but if you will take me with you to France, I shall learn the art of war in a good school, and, perhaps, when my Scots shall see me with you, they will not fight on the other side." Henry V. had an affection for the King of Scotland, and granted him his request; but Archibald Douglas was already preparing to proceed to France, to join Lord Buchan.

Meanwhile, the king was assembling a more considerable army than all those which he had ever led beyond the seas, the Parliament had liberally voted subsidies, and on the 10th of June, 1421, Henry landed at Calais, leaving Queen Catherine in England. The King of Scotland was entrusted to besiege Dreux, and Henry himself laid siege to Meaux, which detained him for several months; the town was commanded by the Bastard De Vaurus, who had made of it a haunt of crimes and of pillage. When the castle was at length surrendered, in the month of May, 1422, the governor was hanged upon the great oak of which the branches had so often borne the corpses of his victims. Catherine, accompanied by the Duke of Bedford, had rejoined her husband, to whom she had recently presented a son. The dauphin, driven back by degrees by the English arms, had finally taken refuge in Bourges; but the Earl of Buchan continued to keep the field; he had taken La Charité and was besieging Cosne. The dauphin had repaired to the army, and the King of England, already for a long time enfeebled by

the fever, was preparing to attack him with the Duke of Burgundy, when his strength completely failed his courage; he was compelled to halt at Corbeil, and the Duke of Bedford having assumed the command of the army, the king was carried back in a litter to the castle of Vincennes: the queen had remained at Paris.

The hand of God was about to arrest this great career; at thirty-four years of age, King Henry V. was dying; the Duke of Bedford was arrested in a march during which he had encountered no enemies, by the wish of his brother, who desired to say farewell to him. Every worldly gift had been lavished upon the young conqueror; the master of two kingdoms, surrounded by the esteem and affection of his English subjects, recently married to the woman of his choice, just become the father of an infant son, he was about to leave them; but the faith and resignation of a Christian surmounted in the soul ready to take flight, the frail benefits of the earth. Amidst his grandeurs and his conquests Henry had led a pure and austere life, and had not neglected to serve God. He dreamt continually, when peace should be re-established, of proceeding to the East, to deliver the Holy Sepulchre; this vision still floated around his death-bed. He had caused his faithful servants to be summoned, "Since it is the will of God, my Creator, thus to shorten my life," he said to them, "His will be done! Console my sweet Catherine; she will be the most disconsolate creature there is in the world." He confided the education of his son to the Earl of Warwick. "You cannot yet love him for his own sake; but, if you should think that you owe me anything return it to him." He had entrusted John, duke of Bedford, to govern France, and designated Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, as regent of England. "Tell Humphrey to beware of quarrels for love of me, and never to allow anything in the world to separate him from John; do not separate yourselves from the Duke of Burgundy." He had summoned his physicians, asking them how long he had yet to live. They hesitated. "Speak," said he impatiently. "Sire," said one of them, "think of your

soul, for in our judgment you have not two hours to remain on earth."

The king had finished his last instructions; he had said farewell to the affairs of this world; his confessor and the priests of his chapel surrounded his bed; the 51st Psalm was being recited: "Build the walls of Jerusalem!" chanted the chaplain. "Upon the faith of a dying king," murmured Henry, "if it had pleased the Lord God to prolong my life, I intended to proceed against the infidels, and deliver the Holy Sepulchre from their hands." The voice was dying away; he closed his eyes, and, amidst the prayers which were being repeated around him, the great soul of King Henry V. entered into eternal repose.

No life in its brevity had been more active than his, and no monarch was more bitterly regretted; he was so even in France, for the people saw themselves thrown back into the horrors of internal dissensions; he was mourned for in England, with sincere and profound grief. After the magnificent ceremonies celebrated in France, the body was brought to England, and solemnly interred at Westminster, beside the shrine of Edward the Confessor. King James of Scotland was chief mourner, while the Duke of Bedford, profoundly sad, seized in France the ill-secured power which his dying brother had confided to him, and endeavoured to secure the two crowns upon the head of the child destined to lose them both.

The religious ceremonies had been prolonged in France; Queen Catherine embarked in the month of October, accompanying the body of her husband, when her father, King Charles VI., died of quartan ague. Notwithstanding his thirty years of madness, and the evils which they had suffered under his reign, the French had remained attached to their unhappy monarch, and the mob thronged the hall of the Hôtel St. Paul, where he was exposed. "Ah! dear prince!" it was said, amidst tears, "never shall we have one as good as you; you have gone to your rest; we remain in tribulation and grief, and seem made to fall into the distress in which were the children of Israel during the captivity of Babylon." The Duke of

Burgundy was bitterly reproached for not having come to see the king during his sickness, and for not having followed his funeral; the Duke of Bedford was chief mourner, and on the 10th of November, 1422, in England and in France, at Westminster and at Saint-Denis, the obsequies of King Henry V. and those of King Charles VI. were solemnized. The royal remains being lowered into the grave, the heralds broke their wands and cried, "God grant long life to Henry, by the grace of God King of France and of England, our sovereign Lord." And the people shouted, "Long live the king!" The hand which was to bear this weighty inheritance was not yet one year old.

The Duke of Bedford had taken the reins of government in France without opposition; in England, the lords of the Parliament had contested the right of the deceased king to designate the regent of the kingdom, and had given to the Duke of Gloucester the title of Protector of the State and of the Church, which was to remind him, it was said, of his duties. Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, brother of King Henry IV. by the third wife of John of Gaunt, was entrusted to second the Earl of Warwick in the education of the little king. The Parliament voted the necessary subsidies, and the war continued in France.

The death of Charles VI. had rallied a few adherents around the dauphin, proclaimed King of France at Mehun-sur-Yèvres, in Berry, under the name of Charles VII. Shortly afterwards he caused himself to be crowned at Poictiers, Rheims being in the power of the English. Right was upon the side of Charles, dispossessed as he was; the memory of the kings his ancestors, the natural aversion to foreigners, increased by eighty years of war, fought in his favour; the noblemen who did not rally around him were less eager to serve the Duke of Bedford than they had been to second Henry V., and, already it had been necessary to stifle, at Poissy, a trifling insurrection in favour of the dauphin.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Bedford had caused all the large

towns and constituent bodies in France to swear fidelity to his nephew, and in order to strengthen that intimacy with the Duke of Burgundy which had preoccupied King Henry even upon his deathbed, he had married Anne of Burgundy, his sister. Madame de Guienne, the widow of the first dauphin, shortly afterwards gave her hand to the Count of Richemont, the brother of the Duke of Brittany, and a solemn treaty of friendship united the three dukes to each other. Brittany and Burgundy, at the same, concluded a private alliance unknown to the Duke of Bedford.

The Regent was returning from Troyes, where his marriage had been celebrated, and was fighting upon the way when he learnt that the Earl of Buchan was attacking his fortress of Crevant-sur-Yonne, endeavouring to open up a communication between the northern territories, which recognized the authority of Charles VII., and the southern provinces, where his cause had made great progress. The Earls of Salisbury and Suffolk were immediately despatched to relieve Crevant; a troop of Burgundians joined them. The orders of the Duke of Bedford were precise: the archers had carried their stakes, and the battle was to be fought on foot, as at Agincourt, without giving any quarter to the enemy. The army of King Charles VII. was, it was said, superior in numbers to that of the English.

On arriving before Crevant, the assailants found themselves arrested by the river Yonne, and remained there two days; when the English had at length forced a passage, they attacked the Scots, leaving the French troops to the Burgundians. "There is no other antidote for the English than the Scots," said Pope Martin V. after the battle of Baugé, but at Crevant the Scots were defeated. The French had promptly yielded, only the bravest knights had supported their allies; Lord Buchan and the Count of Ventadour had both lost an eye, and found themselves prisoners, as well as Saintrailles, a famous Armagnac knight, when the English re-entered Paris in triumph. But Scotland was not exhausted of knights in search of adventure. Archibald Douglas had disembarked at La Rochelle with

five thousand men, and King Charles VII., in his gratitude, conferred upon him the title of Duke of Touraine; he loaded with honours the other Scottish noblemen, of whom several finally became naturalized in France; the barons began to complain of the favours which the king lavished upon his foreign allies; the Duke of Milan had sent him a large reinforcement of Italians.

The Duke of Bedford was uneasy concerning the relief which arrived from Scotland to his adversaries, and he hoped to dry up the source of it by sending back King James into his dominions; negotiations had been opened up; the marriage of the captive prince with Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, and niece of the Bishop of Winchester, had been celebrated; the ransom was settled and James I. had returned to Scotland after nineteen years of captivity, there to govern with an honest firmness to which his people had not been accustomed; but the tide of emigration towards France, slightly slackened, had not ceased in the meanwhile; the justice of the king was rigorously exercised upon the old enemies of his family, and a pretty large number of Scottish knights, flying from his anger, took refuge in the army of Charles VII.; it was with their assistance that the royalist noblemen marched, in the month of August, against Ivry, in Normandy, which the Duke of Bedford was attacking. But the position of the English was strong, discord reigned in the French army, deprived of a chief by the indolence of Charles VII. Douglas and Buchan wished to make the attack; the Count of Alençon and the Count of Aumale refused their consent to it, and drew the army with them. In withdrawing they surprised Verneuil; the town was important, and the Duke of Bedford followed the French thither. A tumultuous council resolved to repulse him in the open plain; the royalists, all on foot, quitted Verneuil; the Milanese alone remained on horseback. The English awaited the attack from behind the stakes of their archers. "Let us allow them to come," said Douglas; but the French noblemen despised the adventurers, as they called their valiant allies, and they made

the attack. The combat was terrible; at one moment, La Hire and Saintrailles, at the head of the Milanese, broke the reserve of the archers; but the reinforcements of the principal body repulsed them, and they were completely routed. Douglas had been slain, as well as his son. Lord Buchan lay upon the field of battle with the Counts of Narbonne, Tonnerre, and Ventadour; the Count of Alençon and the Marshal de la Fayette were prisoners. On his side, the Duke of Bedford had suffered, but the army of King Charles VII. was destroyed; the town of Verneuil surrendered immediately, and the Duke of Bedford caused to be beheaded those of the prisoners who, having sworn allegiance to his nephew, had not kept their oaths.

Bedford conducted affairs in France with firmness and prudence, but he was thwarted in his policy by the thoughtless and passionate acts of his brother, the Duke of Gloucester. The latter had become smitten with Jacqueline of Hainault, the daughter and heiress of the Count of Hainault, and married, in the first instance, to the second dauphin, John, poisoned at Compiègne. Still young at the death of that prince, she had married the Duke of Brabant; but she had soon conceived a horror of her husband, who had, she said, the taste for favourites of low degree, and abandoning him after three years of union, she had taken refuge in England, where King Henry IV. had received her with great honours. He had, however, opposed the projects of marriage of his brother, and upon his death-bed had recommended him to renounce them. The Pope, Martin V., had refused to break off the marriage of Jacqueline of Hainault with the Duke of Brabant; but she pleaded the degree of relationship; she addressed herself to the Anti-Pope, Benedict XIII., who had refused to submit to the decision of the Council of Constance to cause the termination of the schism. Too happy to perform the act of a pontiff, Benedict pronounced the nullity of the marriage, and the Duke of Gloucester espoused Jacqueline of Hainault. The remonstrances of the Duke of Burgundy became more ardent; he had, from the first moment, defended the rights of his cousin, the Duke of Brabant, proposing to refer

the case to the arbitration of the Duke of Bedford. "I am content," said he, "that we should take as judge my very dear and beloved cousin, and also your brother the regent, Duke of Bedford, for he is such a prince, that I know that to you and to me, and to all others, he would be an upright judge." The Duke of Gloucester had listened to no remonstrance, and the dangerous disaffection of the Duke Philip was secretly becoming graver, when, shortly after the battle of Verneuil, Gloucester and Jacqueline landed at Calais with a body of English soldiers, notwithstanding the entreaties of their uncle Beaufort in England, and those of the Duke of Bedford in France; they traversed the dominions of the Duke of Burgundy, and attacked the Duke of Brabant in Hainault; they had already taken possession of Mons, when the Duke of Burgundy, in a state of fury, wrote to Gloucester, to challenge him to single combat. At the same time he sent considerable assistance to the Duke of Brabant, accepting for that object the service of his former enemies. Saintrailles was among the number of the knights who proceeded to fight against the English in the Low Countries. The bonds which united the House of Burgundy to England were beginning to relax, and the Pope was already working secretly in concert with the Duke of Savoy, to negotiate an agreement with Charles VII. The Duke of Gloucester had returned to England; fearing the influence of his uncle Beaufort, he had left Jacqueline entrusted to defend her inheritance. Scarcely had he departed, when the majority of the towns had opened their gates to the Duke of Burgundy; and Jacqueline, at first tightly held within Mons, then led a captive to Ghent, escaped with great difficulty to take refuge in Holland.

So much imprudence and personal views on the part of his nephew had irritated the Bishop of Winchester so far as to bring about an open quarrel. The Duke of Bedford was compelled to repair to England towards the end of the year 1425 to prevent bloodshed between the two parties. He had some trouble in effecting a reconciliation, sincere on the part of the Duke of Gloucester, whose character was as frank as it was

impetuous; doubtful in that of the priest, more implacable than the warrior; the Bishop of Winchester resigned the seals, and finding himself elevated by Martin V. to the dignity of the Cardinalship, he quitted England with the Duke of Bedford. The latter had been recalled to France by the defection of the Duke of Brittany, who had recently declared himself in favour of King Charles VII. at the instigation of his brother, the Count of Richemont, already for some time rallied, and whom the king had made constable. Scarcely had Bedford set foot upon French soil, when he sent an army into Brittany; the country was devastated, the Duke of Brittany was shut up within Rennes and so closely pressed, that he found himself compelled to sever his alliance with the King of France; he swore for the second time to the treaty of Troyes, and did homage to the little king Henry VI.

The Pope, Martin V., had solemnly declared the nullity of the marriage of Jacqueline de Hainault with the Duke of Gloucester, and the latter had consoled himself for this by espousing Eleanor Cobham, formerly a lady of the household of his wife. The Countess Jacqueline still held out bravely in Holland; the Duke of Brabant had recently died; his brother, who had succeeded to him, had no claim upon Jacqueline or upon her dominions; she would have been free if the enemy whom she had raised up had not been too powerful and too greedy to stop on such a fine road; from town to town, from territory to territory, the Duke of Burgundy prosecuted his conquest, and Jacqueline, abandoned by nearly all her vassals, a victim on sea and on land, at length consented, in the summer of 1428, to recognize the Duke Philip as her heir, and to entrust to him immediately the government of her dominions. The duke, satisfied with the English, who had not hindered him in this last act of his ambition, promised troops for the great expedition which was being prepared against the country beyond the Loire, almost entirely rallied to King Charles VII.

The war had languished since the battle of Verneuil; the King of France was poor, indolent, and delivered up to favourites.

The Sire de Giac and the Sire de Beaulieu had given place to the Sire de la Trémoille, more adventurous and more dangerous than the two others; he counteracted beside the king the influence of the Constable de Richemont and of the true friends of France. The Duke of Bedford, for a long time paralyzed by the quarrels of the Duke of Gloucester, had recently received reinforcements from England, under the orders of the Earl of Salisbury. The latter resolved to undertake the siege of Orleans. On the 12th of October, 1428, he appeared before the city, commencing his siege preparations according to the most learned rules of the time, but not considering that he had given time for the place to furnish itself with men and victuals, to repair its fortifications, and to place itself in a state of defence; the best knights of the King of France had shut themselves up in Orleans.

The assaults had failed, the citizens of Orleans valiantly supporting the garrison. The Bastard of Orleans, count of Dunois, had brought reinforcements; Salisbury dreamt of metamorphosing the siege into a blockade, when, contemplating the city from the Tournelles fort, which he had taken at the outset, he was struck in the face by a stone shot from a falconet, which rebounded against the embrasure of the window and killed his esquire beside him. The general was dying; it was found necessary to carry him to Ferté-sur-Meung, where he died at the end of a few days, to the great joy of the population of Orleans. The Earl of Suffolk arrived to take the command, and the siege continued. The English army, badly installed beneath its huts of tree branches, suffered from the cold, and often from hunger; the country which surrounded them was hostile and devastated; the Duke of Bedford resolved, in the month of February, to send provisions to him from Paris. It was during Lent and the convoy which Sir John Falstaff was entrusted to lead, consisted especially of herrings, when, on the 12th of February, he was attacked by the French near the village of Rouvray, between Graville and Orleans. As usual, the Scotch and the French quarrelled among themselves; the former

wishing to fight on foot, the latter to remain on horseback; they were within bowshot, and the English archers were beginning to shoot; the rout was not long delayed, and Sir John Falstaff arrived triumphantly at the camp with the herrings which gave their name to his victory.

This defeat threw discouragement into Orleans; hunger began to make itself felt; the citizens spoke of surrendering their city, not to the English, but to the Duke of Burgundy; the latter came to Paris to consult about it with the regent. "No," said Bedford, "it is just that those who have had the trouble should have the honour." Philip did not remonstrate; disquieting rumours were beginning to circulate among the Burgundians: it was said that the Duke of Bedford had declared that the Duke of Burgundy would finally proceed to England to drink more beer than would quench his thirst. The duke quitted the court, dissatisfied and gloomy. The King of France was at Chinon; his affairs appeared desperate; many noblemen had abandoned him, and he would have willingly retired to the south, abandoning to their fate Orleans and the banks of the Loire, but for the efforts of his wife, Mary of Anjou, and the anger of Dunois. La Trémoille had caused the constable to be sent away.

Deliverance was approaching by the weakest instrument which it has ever pleased God to employ for the accomplishment of His designs. A young girl was growing up in the village of Domrémy, upon the borders of Lorraine and Burgundy; she was named Joan of Arc, she was eighteen years of age, she was good and pious. For a long while already—from the age of thirteen years—she had begun to have visions, to hear voices, Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, and Saint Margaret commanding her to go to France, to the assistance of the king: as she grew up the voices became more urgent. People began to speak in the village of the strange exaltation of Joan. The Sire de Baudricourt, in command at Vaucouleurs, wished to see her; but he sent her back ridiculing her. Being pressed, however, by others, he resolved to cause her to be taken to the



SHE WENT STRAIGHT TO CHARLES VII.

king. "I must go to the king before Mid-Lent," said Joan, "even should I have to wear my legs to the knees to reach him, for nobody in the world, neither king nor duke, nor daughter of the King of Scotland can deliver the kingdom of France; I should prefer to remain and spin beside my poor mother, for it is not my work, but I must go, because Messire wills it." "Who is Messire?" it was asked. "It is God," said Joan, and the noblemen who were leading her forward were struck with admiration on seeing her pass the night kneeling in the churches, and fasting on bread and water.

When she arrived at Chinon, the king refused for several days to see her, saying that she was a mad woman; but the rumour of her journey had already spread. Dunois and the besieged in Orleans had caused inquiry to be made as to who was this young girl who was to deliver them; Joan was admitted into the great hall full of noblemen richly dressed; none of them detached himself from the groups; she went straight towards Charles VII. and knelt before him. "I am not the king, Joan," he said, and he indicated one of his courtiers to her. "By my God, gentle prince," she said, "it is you, and no other. Most noble lord dauphin, the King of Heaven sends a message to you through me, to be consecrated and crowned in the city of Rheims, and you shall be His Lieutenant in the kingdom of France." Charles was won over; he drew Joan into a corner, and asked a thousand questions of her. Confidence began to spread in the army; the soldiers asked that Joan should be placed at their head, to go and deliver Orleans. The doctors and the bishops caused her to undergo interrogations; after having said that she was mad, they feared that she might be a sorceress, but neither examinations nor interrogations shook her simplicity and resolution. "The sign which I am to give is to cause the siege of Orleans to be raised," she said. "But if God wishes to deliver France, He has no need of armed men," insisted the doctors. "Ah!" she replied, "the soldiers will fight, and God will give them the victory."

At length it was resolved to attempt the venture, and Joan, with the state of a chieftain, departed from Blois at the head of a considerable convoy, led by the best captains of the French army. She wished to attack Orleans from the right bank, saying that her voices had commanded her to do it: but the soldiers were of a contrary opinion; they deceived Joan, and were arriving by the left bank; Dunois came in a little boat to meet the convoy. "Are you the Bastard of Orleans?" she said to him. "Yes, and very pleased at your arrival." "You gave advice that we should come by the Sologne," she said, "and not by the Beauce, across the dominion of the English: the advice of Messire was not yours. I bring you the best succour that ever knight or city received; it is the succour of the King of Heaven." And everybody was surprised on hearing her speak so well. The convoy entered Orleans without striking a blow; the soldiers returned therefrom, but Joan wished to remain in the city. The besieged crowded round her, already reassured and encouraged by her presence. Anxiety prevailed in the English camp; the leaders declared that Joan was mad; the soldiers feared that she might be a sorceress. She had written to the Earl of Suffolk and to Talbot, inviting them to retire. As they would not listen to her, and loaded her with insults, she was greatly enraged, and demanded that they should be attacked immediately. A second convoy had entered the city; Joan was sleeping, suddenly she awoke. "Ah! Lord," she said, "the blood of our people is flowing; why was I not summoned sooner? My arms! My horse!" and she ran towards the fortress of Saint-Loup. She had not been deceived; a few soldiers had attempted a sally against the fortress occupied by the English; they were beginning to waver when Joan arrived; many soldiers had followed her; the English were repulsed, and the fortress recaptured. Joan had fought like a knight, and every one had admired her; but she was sad; many men had died without confessing. "I have compassion for their souls," she said. Terror spread among the English. "She performs miracles," it was said at Orleans. "She is a sor-

ceress," said the archers of the enemy, but they began to fear her.

From fortress to fortress, from rampart to rampart, all that the English had gained was by degrees taken from them; the Tournelles fortress had recently been taken; the citizens of Orleans were rejoicing; the Earl of Suffolk and his lieutenants had resolved to retire. However, they did not wish to escape ignominiously. The camp had been fired, and, arrayed in battle order, the English appeared to await the attack. It was on the 8th of May, 1429. "Do not assail them first," said Joan; "for the love and honour of the holy Sabbath, let them be allowed to depart if they wish to go: if they should attack you, defend yourselves boldly, and you shall be masters." The English did not make an attack, and retreated without a struggle; Joan could not prevent the soldiers from throwing themselves upon the rear of the English army and gaining a large quantity of booty. Plunder, like disorder of all kinds, agitated and saddened her: she asked pardon of God in all the churches, for all the evil which she had not been able to prevent.

Great satisfaction prevailed at the court of King Charles, who was causing rejoicings in honour of Joan; but she took no pleasure in the amusements; she wished the king to go and cause himself to be consecrated at Rheims. "I am strongly urged to conduct you thither," she said; "I shall last but one year or scarcely more; I must therefore employ it well." And as she was questioned about the voices, "I offered up a prayer," she said; "I complained that you would not believe what I say; thereupon the voice came and said, 'Go! go! my child, I will help you; go!' and it made me very joyful; I wish it might last for ever." On the 11th of June the French army was before Jargeau, where the Earl of Suffolk had shut himself up. At the head of the attacking party was the Duke of Alençon, recently withdrawn from captivity. "Forward, gentle duke, to the assault!" cried Joan, and as he delayed, "Ah! gentle duke, are you afraid?" said she; "you well know that I have promised to your wife to return you safe." A large

stone overthrew Joan; she was thought dead, but she immediately arose. "Come! come! at the English!" she cried; "Messire has condemned them; they are ours." Jargeau was carried by storm; the Earl of Suffolk and his brother, John de la Pole, were made prisoners; several fortresses fell into the power of the French; the English had retreated towards the Beauce, under the orders of Talbot.

The constable had recently rejoined the army; it was resolved to follow the enemy. "Ah! my God!" said Joan, "we must fight them; were they even suspended to the clouds, we should have them, for God has sent us to punish them. The gentle dauphin will to-day gain the greatest victory which he has yet had; my Council has told me that they are ours."

The English had halted in the open, in the environs of Patay; Sir John Falstaff and many others were inclined not to fight. The soldiers were discouraged by their recent checks, they said, and the spells of Joan took away all their courage; but Talbot was ashamed of having retreated so far; he began to make his arrangements for the fight; and the archers were driving in their stakes, when the advanced guard of the French army came and attacked them with that inconsiderate ardour, so sadly rewarded at Crécy and at Poictiers; but this time the English were still in disorder; the soldiers who had remained on horseback fled; the rout was complete, and Sir John Falstaff gallopped to Paris, where the Duke of Bedford, in a great rage, wished to send him the Garter. Lord Talbot and a large number of knights were made prisoners. "Well," Messire Talbot," said the Duke of Alençon, "you did not expect this, this morning?" "It is the fortune of war," replied the Englishman, without emotion. Joan no longer spoke of anything but the visit to Rheims.

The councillors of King Charles still hesitated; the Sire de la Trémoille feared lest he might be supplanted beside his master; he contrived once more to remove the constable; at length the persistence of Joan prevailed, and the king started with his little army: Auxerre, summoned to surrender,

promised to open its gates if Troyes and Rheims would do likewise. The Burgundian garrison of Troyes resisted, and the French had no provisions. Murmurs began to be uttered against Joan; she urged the king to make the assault. "You will enter into Troyes within two days, by love or by force, and the treacherous Burgundians will be completely dismayed." "Whoever should be certain of obtaining possession of it in six days, could well wait, Joan," said the chancellor, Archbishop of Rheims. "Yes," she persisted, "you shall have it to-morrow." On the morrow the entry into Troyes was made; Friar Richard, a famous preacher, came to meet Joan, and besprinkled her with holy water, to assure himself that she was not a sorceress; Joan smiled. On the 15th of July, 1429, Rheims opened its gates, and on the 17th the king was at length crowned in the cathedral. Joan stood beside him, holding her white standard, with these two words: "Jesus, Maria." When the king had received the sacrament, she threw herself at his feet, in tears. "Gentle king," she said, "now is fulfilled the good pleasure of God, who willed it that you should come to Rheims to receive your worthy consecration, to show that you were king, and he to whom the kingdom should belong." And, from that day, she spoke no longer but of returning to her village. "I have accomplished that which Messire has commanded me," she repeated, "which was to raise the siege of Orleans and to cause the gentle king to be crowned; I wish he could cause me to be taken back to my father and mother, who would be so pleased to see me again. I would mind their sheep and cattle, as I was wont to do."

Meanwhile, the Duke of Bedford was collecting reinforcements; the dissensions which continued in the English council between the Duke of Gloucester and Cardinal de Beaufort impeded the consignments of men and money; the regent had even been compelled to weaken his garrisons in Normandy, to assemble an army in the neighbourhood of Paris, when his uncle, the Cardinal, sent him a corps of two or three thousand men, whom he had raised with the object of making war in

Bohemia, against the partisans of John Huss, excommunicated in a body by the Pope. The cardinal had already furnished heavy sums for sustaining the war in France, and this fresh succour enabled the Duke of Bedford to make an expedition into Normandy, with the intention of stifling the insurrections which had attracted the constable. The noblemen favourable to the French were restrained and the constable repulsed; but meanwhile Charles VII., led by Joan of Arc, whom he had retained beside him, made an attempt upon Paris. Soissons, Senlis, Beauvais, had opened their gates to him, but the soldiers marched unwillingly towards the capital; the captains did not agree; the assault was lightly made, and Joan was wounded. The troops were furious. "You told us that we should be in Paris this evening," they said to Joan. "And so should we have been there, if you had fought well," she replied. The king, discouraged, retired to Bourges, to spend the winter.

While the King of France was going away from his good city of Paris, the Duke of Burgundy arrived there, still hesitating between the two parties, notwithstanding the efforts of his sister, the Duchess of Bedford, to renew his old intimacy with the English regent. By degrees the influence of national feeling began to reawaken in the soul of the Duke Philip, as his thirst for vengeance was appeased; the French promised him every conceivable reparation for the assassination of John Sans Peur, and it was necessary, in order to retain him in the camp of the English, for the Duke of Bedford to offer him the command of the allied forces, thus abdicating in his favour. The regent retired to Normandy, where he preserved the most complete authority. Joan was waging war upon the banks of the Loire; she had taken the castle of Pierre-le-Montoir, but she had been repulsed before La Charité. When the king at length took the field in the spring of 1430, Joan was entrusted to deliver Compiègne, besieged by the Duke Philip in person, and she contrived to enter into the town. The fatal moment was approaching.

On the 25th of May the garrison of Compiègne had made a sally. Joan led the troops, and she had attacked an important position

occupied by the Burgundians, when a crushing force made her retreat. She covered and directed the retreat: at the moment when she was about to re-enter the town, the drawbridge was withdrawn, and, whether by mistake or by treason, Joan found herself almost alone outside the walls. She had rallied a few soldiers around her, and endeavoured to gain the country; but she had been recognized; she was surrounded and thrown from her horse. She was still upon the ground when she surrendered to the Bastard of Vendôme, who conducted her to the quarters of John of Luxembourg.

The rejoicing was great in the English and Burgundian camp; the Duke of Bedford caused the *Te Deum* to be sung; but the French did not concern themselves about the heroine who had delivered them; her task was accomplished; she had restored courage to the soldiers and hope to the captains; her enthusiasm had drawn along the most distrustful. Now she was a prisoner. Her enemies were negotiating among themselves to possess her; but those whom she had saved by the help of God did not raise a sword to defend her, and did not find a farthing to ransom her.

The Duke of Burgundy had returned to his dominion of Flanders, agitated by several insurrections, when the Bishop of Beauvais, Peter Cauchon, at the instigation of the English, claimed Joan from John of Luxembourg. "The sorceress had been captured in his diocese," he said, "and should be tried by the Church." The count resisted for a long time, but they finally gave him ten thousand livres, and he sold Joan. She was led in the first place to Arras, then to Crotoy; at length she was taken to Rouen, where the little king, Henry VI., had recently arrived. The French arms continued to make fresh progress; every day the English lost some towns; the Duke Philip, lieutenant-general of the kingdom, who had recently become master of Brabant by the death of the young duke, maintained the English alliance by such slight bonds, that one check more might suddenly break them; the anger and shame of the English willingly attributed all their misfortunes to Joan;

when she appeared they were at the height of success; since then everything had failed with them. Perhaps her death might bring a return of luck. The most enlightened among the English captains looked upon her as a sorceress. "She is an agent of Satan," the Duke of Bedford had written to the Council of England. Hatred always finds cowards to serve her; Peter Cauchon had been driven from Beauvais by his flock, as English, when the town had surrendered to Charles VII., he had been proposed to the Pope by the Duke of Bedford for the archbishopric of Rouen; his vengeance and ambition impelled him to ruin Joan. The English, however, had not sufficient confidence in him to place her in his hands. Joan was kept in the large tower of the castle, in the custody of the Earl of Warwick.

The noblest hearts, the firmest minds of the middle ages appeared to lose all generosity and all justice when they found themselves confronted with an unhappy wretch, accused of sorcery. The brave Warwick concealed himself to hear what the prisoner said to the treacherous confessor who had been brought. She was conducted before the Council of Inquisition, presided over by the Bishop of Beauvais. Neither violence nor ill-will contrived to agitate her: nothing disconcerted this poor country girl, who knew nothing but her prayers. "Are you in the grace of God?" she was asked suddenly. "It is a great thing," she replied, "to answer such a question." "Yes," said one of the assessors, "and the accused is not obliged to answer." "You would do better to hold your tongue," exclaimed the Bishop angrily. "If I am not," replied Joan, "may God receive me into it; and if I am, may God preserve me in it." "What virtue do you attribute to your banner?" asked the Bishop. "None at all; I said, 'Enter boldly among the English,' and I entered myself." "Why, then, did you hold it beside the altar at Rheims?" "It had had all the trouble," said Joan, smiling, "it was quite right that it should witness the honour."

In vain was she interrogated upon her visions; she always replied that St. Catherine and St. Margaret visited her and encouraged her in her prison; it was by their advice that she

refused to discard man's attire, which had been made a crime against her. She was urged to submit herself to the Church, but she did not understand what was asked of her, and seeing before her priests hostile to her cause and to her king, she implored that there might be among the judges some men of her party.

The sentence was pronounced: the Church rejected Joan as an impure member, and delivered her up to secular justice. The justice was the vengeance of the English. The unhappy prisoner was conducted to the public square, where two scaffolds were erected; Joan was placed upon one of these, the preacher who was to expound the sentence to the people was upon the other, the multitude were crowded together below.

As long as the Doctor of the Sorbonne dwelt upon her misdeeds and the deceptions by which she had deluded the poor people of France, Joan listened in silence; but when he exclaimed, "Charles, who proclaimest thyself her king and governor, thou hast adhered like a heretic as thou art to the words and acts of a woman defamed and without honour," the loyal heart of Joan was unable to contain its emotion. "Speak of me," she exclaimed, "but not of the king; he is a good Christian, and I dare say and swear under pain of death that he is the noblest among the Christians who love their faith and their Church." "Silence her," cried the Bishop of Beauvais.

They wished to make her sign her abjuration. "What is abjuration?" she said. "It is that your judges have judged well." She refused. "What I have done, I have done well to do," she repeated. At length she yielded. "I submit to the Universal Church," she said, "and since the clergy say that my visions are not credible I will no longer maintain them." "Sign, or you will perish by the fire," said the preacher. She made a cross at the foot of the paper which was presented to her, and was taken back into her prison. Her submission pledged her to resume woman's clothing.

The English murmured, not understanding anything of the manœuvres of the bishop. "All goes ill, because Joan escapes,"

said the Earl of Warwick. The priests smiled. Two days after her abjuration, Joan, on awaking, found only in her chamber a man's dress: she resisted for a long time. "You know that I have promised not to wear it," she said; she was obliged to rise however. The jailors went and informed the Bishop. "She is taken!" said the Earl of Warwick. "You have fallen back into your illusions," said Cauchon to the prisoner; "you have heard your voices." "Yes," said Joan resolutely, "and they have told me that it was a great pity to have signed your abjuration in order to save my life. I only signed through fear of the fire. Give me a comfortable prison, and I will do what the Church may wish."

The stake awaited her. "Farewell," cried Cauchon to the Earl of Warwick, on going out of the prison. The poor child tore out her hair when she learnt the sentence passed upon her. "I had seven times rather that they should behead me," she repeated. She was being conducted to execution, when she perceived the Bishop of Beauvais. "Bishop, I die through you," she said. Eight hundred Englishmen accompanied the cart. She prayed aloud with so much fervour that the French wept on hearing her; several of the assessors who had taken part in the prosecution, had not the strength to follow her to execution. The public square had been reached. "Ah! Rouen! Rouen!" she said, "is it here that I am to die?" The preacher had reproached her with her relapse; she listened to him with calmness, redoubling her prayers. The Bishop of Noyon descended from the scaffold, being unable to bear this spectacle; the Bishop of Winchester was weeping; she was embracing the parish cross which had been brought to her. The executioner seized her. Above the stake were written these words: "Heretic, relapser, apostate, idolater." Joan's new confessor, a good monk who did not betray her, had mounted upon the stake with her; he was still there when the fire was lighted. "Descend quickly," said Joan, "but stay near enough for me to see the cross. Ah! Rouen! Rouen! I greatly fear that you may suffer for my death." The flame enveloped her; she was still heard

praying; at length a last cry, "Jesus!" and all was ended. The English themselves were touched. "It is a fine end," said the soldiers; "we are very happy to have seen her, for she was a good woman." "She has died a martyr, and for her true Lord," said the French. The executioner went and confessed on the same evening, fearing never to obtain the forgiveness of God. Cardinal Beaufort caused the ashes of the stake to be cast into the Seine, fearing that they might be made into relics; and the King of England addressed to all the princes of Christendom, a letter recounting the proceedings, and how the victim herself had acknowledged that evil and lying spirits had deluded her. The process of rehabilitation, afterwards made at the court of Rome, at the request of Charles VII, the only token of remembrance which he gave to the unhappy Joan, established in its real light the historical truth; but justice had already been done by public opinion. "She was a marvellous girl, valiant in war," it was said in Flanders as well as in Burgundy and in France; "the English have wickedly caused her death, and through revenge." Peter Cauchon was never Archbishop of Rouen; he became Bishop of Lisieux, where he was interred in the wall of St. James's church, as though he did not feel himself worthy to repose in the sacred place.

In burning Joan the English had hoped to regain their former good fortune: it was nothing of the kind. Every day a fresh town opened its gates to the French. Indolent as Charles VII. still was, national instinct now fought for him. The Duke of Bedford wished to satisfy the taste of the Parisians for festivals while giving religious sanction to the rights of his nephew upon France; and on the 17th of December 1431, the little King Henry VI., nine years of age, was solemnly crowned at Notre Dame. The ceremony was magnificent; wine and milk flowed in the streets; but the French noblemen were few, the Duke of Burgundy had not arrived, and Cardinal Beaufort himself placed the crown upon the head of Henry VI.: it was the English coronation of an English Prince. The sovereign started back shortly afterwards for England, leaving to all those

who had approached him a sad impression of languor and melancholy.

The war languished meanwhile: the English were in need of men and money, and the quarrels of the favourites with the great French noblemen continued around King Charles VII.; but the Duke of Burgundy detached himself more and more from England. The Duchess of Bedford died without children in the month of November, 1432, and six months after her death the duke married Jacquette of Luxembourg, daughter of the Count of Saint Pol. The Duke of Burgundy considered himself offended by the shortness of the mourning, and by the union contracted without his authority with one of his vassals. He was seeking a pretext for a quarrel; his treaty with King Charles was almost concluded; the blood which had inundated France for fourteen years, sufficed, it was thought, to satisfy the shade of the Duke John. The counsellors of the king urged the duke towards peace; but he made much of his scruples anent the oaths which bound him to the English. Appeal was made to Pope Eugenius IV., and through his efforts a great congress assembled at Arras, in 1435. The Duke of Burgundy had summoned all his nobility; King Charles had sent twenty-nine noblemen, at the head of whom walked the Constable. Cardinal Beaufort, with twenty-six barons, half English and half French, represented the interests of England. The Duke Philip displayed, for receiving such great company, all his wonted magnificence; festivals succeeded festivals, and jousts followed tournaments; but matters were meanwhile being negotiated and so manifestly inclined to the advantage of the French, that Cardinal Beaufort shortly retired in disgust, denying the authority of the congress. Affairs proceeded more rapidly after his departure; the Duke Philip caused his forgiveness and his alliance to be dearly purchased; but at length the treaty was concluded, and on the 26th of September 1435, the Duke of Burgundy, relieved of his oaths to the English, promised to live in peace and friendship with the King of France. All the noblemen swore likewise; when it came to the turn of the Sire

de Lannoy, he cried, "I have already five times sworn with this hand to keep the peace during the war which has just ended, and my five oaths have been violated. With the grace of God, I will keep this one."

The Duke of Bedford had not lived long enough to see the conclusion of a treaty which virtually took from England the conquests of King Henry V.; he had died at Rouen, on the 14th of September, exhausted by the struggle which he had sustained for thirteen years, with a courage, firmness and prudence worthy of the confidence which had been manifested towards him by his dying brother. Three days after the signing of the peace, an unnatural mother, abandoned by all her children—Queen Isabel of Bavaria, was dying alone in Paris, in solitude and misery, the just punishment of her crimes; the Duke of Burgundy had publicly declared war against the English, and in the month of April, 1436, at his instigation, the feeble English garrison which was stationed in Paris was overcome by the people, and found itself compelled to open the gates to the Marshal of Isle-Adam: the capital once more became French, the English were driven back into Normandy, where their authority remained complete. The Duke of York, for a moment regent of France, had been replaced by the Earl of Warwick, who established the seat of his government at Rouen, where he died. Two towns yet remained to the English near Paris, Meaux and Pontoise; these were taken by the troops of King Charles VII. For a moment, in 1436, the Duke of Burgundy even threatened Calais with a considerable army; but before the arrival of the Duke of Gloucester, who had challenged him to combat, and claimed to take possession of the dominions of his wife, Jacqueline, who had recently died, the Duke Philip retreated precipitately into his dominions, impelled by his troops, who were disbanding. In 1444, through the efforts of Isabel of Portugal, wife of the Duke of Burgundy, added to the representations of the Duke of Orleans, recently snatched from the captivity which he had suffered since the battle of Agincourt, a truce of two years was concluded between

the two nations; the horrors of the Hundred Years' War were at length reaching their end.

While the English were losing ground by degrees in France, England impoverished by the necessities of the war, underwent the commotion of a continual struggle between the two chiefs of the government, the Duke of Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort. Queen Catherine, the mother of the king, had retained no influence, and three years after the death of Henry V. she had married a plain Welsh gentleman, Owen Tudor, by whom she had had three sons, whom she confided to the young King Henry VI. when she died in 1437. The Duchess of Bedford followed her example, by wedding Sir Richard Woodville or Wydeville; but these misalliances had proved grave dangers to the ambitious men, elevated to a rank for which they had not been born: Owen Tudor and Woodville were thrown into prison, and the wife of the Duke of Gloucester, Eleanor Cobham, accused of sorcery, was condemned to do public penance and to be imprisoned for the remainder of her days. The young King Henry had assumed no authority over his kingdom. He was twenty-two years of age; he was tall and handsome, but languid, apathetic, timid, solely occupied by his books and his devotions. He might have become a holy monk, but he was destitute of the qualities necessary to a king in difficult and hard times. A wife was sought for him who might supply the defects of his character, and the choice of his advisers fell upon Margaret of Anjou, cousin of the Queen of France, and daughter of René of Anjou, King of Sicily and Jerusalem, Duke of Maine, Anjou, and Bar; but a king without kingdom, a duke without duchy, a chevalier and a poet, without other fortune than his harp and his sword. His daughter was purchased of him by restoring to him his two provinces of Anjou and Maine, which the French arms had not yet been able to break through. The English now held but Normandy and a few towns in Guienne. The marriage of the king concluded by the Earl of Suffolk and Cardinal Beaufort, against the advice of the Duke of Gloucester, had not been successful in England. There, there

were regrets for the loss of the two provinces which formerly formed part of the dominions of the Angevin kings, and over which England had always thought it had rights. Queen Margaret, besides, with her beauty, her wit, and her energy, brought into her new country ideas of government which were little favourable to English independence. She had confidence in the worthy Suffolk, who had become a Marquis and soon afterwards a Duke; she shared his power, and treated with haughtiness those who approached her. She manifested, in particular, little liking for the Duke of Gloucester, whom she considered as her enemy. In the month of February, 1447, the Parliament was convoked at Bury St. Edmund's; the partisans of Suffolk were assembled in the neighbourhood, when the Duke of Gloucester arrived on the morrow of the opening of the session. Being immediately arrested and accused of the crime of high treason, he was found dead in his bed on the 28th of February, as had been formerly at Calais another Duke of Gloucester. A few of his servants were executed after his death, under pretext of a plot to release the Duchess Eleanor. Suffolk took possession of the property of the duke, whom the public voice accused him of having murdered. Cardinal Beaufort had recently died in his palace of Walvesey (on the 11th of April), leaving immense riches consecrated to the foundation of charitable institutions which still exist. Suffolk remained the sole master of the government. King Henry VI. was occupied in the creation of Eton College, and in the erection of King's College, at Cambridge, where the marvellous beauty of the chapel remains as a monument of the exquisite taste of the poor king, so little suited to the affairs of this world.

Meanwhile the truce with France, several times renewed, had been violently broken by King Charles VII., under pretext of an infraction which well suited his wishes. France was rising again, and England was profoundly weakened by its internal dissensions. The troops assembled in Maine, entered into Normandy; the Duke of Somerset, who commanded there, had few soldiers and no money. Dunois marched against Rouen, and

notwithstanding the desperate resistance of Talbot, who was consigned as a hostage into the hands of the French, the citizens delivered up the city to him. Sir Thomas Kyriel, despatched as a reinforcement to the Duke of Somerset was defeated on the 13th of April, 1450, near Formigny, by the constable and the Count of Clermont. Bayeux, Avranches, Caen succombed in succession; Cherbourg was taken by storm, and by the 12th of August the English had lost the whole of Normandy. In the following year the towns which yet elected for them in Guienne surrendered without striking a blow. Henry VI. no longer retained but Calais upon French soil. Charles VII., drawn now from his elegant indolence, proposed negotiations. "My sword shall never return to its scabbard, while I shall not have retaken all that I have lost!" cried the poor king Henry VI., who had never drawn a sword in his life: France no longer feared him.

Internal difficulties sufficed to absorb the efforts of the faithful servants of the King of England. The Parliament had at length risen against the Duke of Suffolk; he had been conducted to the Tower, protesting his innocence. The accusations produced against him were confused, ill-founded, and frivolous; the graver subjects of distrust had scarcely been touched upon. The duke threw himself upon his knees before the king, refused to shield himself with his privilege by demanding the judgment of his peers, and consigned himself to the justice of his master, who wished to save him. He was simply banished from England for five years: the Parliament accepted this compromise, not without a protest on the part of the lords in favour of the rights of their order.

The anger of the population of London was not so easy to disarm as the vengeance of the Parliament. Suffolk had difficulty in retiring safe and sound to his estate; he had gathered around him his friends and partisans, swearing before them that he was innocent, when he embarked for the Continent on the 1st of May, 1430. He was sailing about on the morrow between Dover and Calais, when a large war-ship, the *Nicholas-de-la-Tour*, hailed his little vessel. The duke was summoned on board the

ship. "You are here, traitor," said the captain, as he placed his foot upon the deck, and Suffolk was immediately placed under arrest. Two days elapsed; the Duke had asked for a confessor; a little bark came up with the *Nicholas;* she bore an executioner and an axe. Suffolk was led upon deck and beheaded. None inquired whence had come the warrant; but the importance of the ships entrusted to arrest the banished man at sea, caused a supposition that the greatest personages of the kingdom had not remained strangers to the execution. The people were satisfied, their vengeance was consummated. New events absorbed all minds.

Numerous insurrections had for a short time past broken out in different parts of England. An adventurer, Jack Cade, an Irishman by origin, who had for a long while served in the English armies in France, placed himself at the head of the insurgents. He had assumed the name of Mortimer, and gave himself out as a relative of the Duke of York, who then commanded in Ireland. Thirty thousand men soon found themselves assembled around Cade, nearly all from the county of Kent. It was said that the queen wished to avenge herself for the death of her favourite, whose decapitated body had been brought by the waves to the coast of Dover. Cade brought his forces to Blackheath, as Wat Tyler had formerly done, and the "complaints of the commons of Kent," were despatched to the king at London. Amongst the number of the demands of the insurgents, they begged Henry VI. to recall to his side his blood relatives, the Dukes of York, Exeter, Buckingham, and Norfolk, in order to punish the traitors who had caused the death of the Duke of Gloucester, as of the holy father in God, Cardinal Beaufort, and lost the dominions of Maine, Anjou, and Normandy. The reply of the court was the despatch of an army against the rebels; but the first detachment was defeated: the soldiers murmured saying that they did not like to fight against their countrymen, who claimed the liberties of the nation. Concessions were attempted; but the forces of Cade swelled every day, and on the 3rd of July he entered into London. Lord Say, one of

the most unpopular ministers, was dragged from the Tower, where he had been sent by the court in the hope of satisfying the insurgents; and, notwithstanding his protestations, he was executed after a mock trial. Some houses were pillaged, and on the morrow, when the rebels wished to re-enter into London, after having been encamped at Blackheath, the citizens defended the bridge. Cade was compelled to retreat. He was amused by vain concessions and the promise of an amnesty; he was soon afterwards pursued and killed in the struggle; and his head was planted upon London Bridge. The insurrection was stifled; but the name of the Duke of York had been put forward; it circulated from mouth to mouth, and many people began to ask whether the rights to the throne which he held through Anne Mortimer, his mother, did not supersede those of King Henry VI. Prince Richard, son of the Earl of Cambridge, had succeeded to the title of Duke of York, at the death of his paternal uncle; the successes which he had obtained in his government of Ireland had increased his popularity.

Suddenly, towards the end of August, 1451, the Duke of York appeared at the court without giving a reason for having quitted Ireland, and after a short visit to the king, he retired to his castle at Fotheringay. Henry VI. endeavoured to place in opposition to him the Duke of Somerset, the head of the younger branch of the House of Lancaster; but the duke was under suspicion, as a favourite of the queen, and too much ill feeling existed against him for the loss of Normandy, for it to be possible to counterbalance the influence of the Duke of York. In the Parliament, which opened in November, the proposal was made in the House of Commons to declare the Duke of York heir to the throne, as the king had no children. The author of the proposal was sent to the Tower, and projects menacing to the liberty of the Duke of York began to circulate. He retired into Shropshire, where he assembled together some troops, while protesting his fidelity towards the king. Whilst an army was marching against him, he advanced upon London; the gates of that city were closed to him, and it was at Dartford,

that he met the king. After some peaceful negotiations, York repaired alone to the royal tent; he was immediately arrested there. The Duke of Somerset would have wished for a summary trial and execution; but the king athwart the mists of his intellect had a horror of blood: he sent the Duke of York to the Tower. He was soon released upon the rumour of the approach of his son, the Earl of March, at the head of an army. He promised to be faithful to the king, and he was left free to return to his castle at Wigmore. The Duke of Somerset remained at the head of the government.

A movement in favour of the English had manifested itself in Guienne. The brave Talbot was despatched thither, notwithstanding his eighty years, at the head of a small army of picked men. Bordeaux surrendered easily, and the red cross of England reappeared in the greater number of the southern towns, when King Charles VII. entered with his troops into the province. He had assembled together considerable forces, and was laying siege to Castillon, when Talbot resolved to relieve the town; he made the attack on the 30th of July, 1453, and was about to carry the position, when the Count of Ponthieu fell upon him with reinforcements; the English retreated, and Talbot was slain. The French army presented itself before Bordeaux; the garrison held out bravely during two months; hunger compelled it to capitulate, and on the 10th of October, the English soldiers, accompanied by a great number of citizens of the place, embarked for England. Guienne was henceforth French; and the last fragment of the inheritance of Eleanor of Aquitaine had slipped from her descendants.

The mental derangement of King Henry VI. continued to increase, and the Parliament had recalled the Duke of York to the council. A son had been born to Queen Margaret; she had, from that circumstance, assumed more pride and a more fixed determination to govern herself and at her pleasure. Meanwhile the Commons had obtained the impeachment of the Duke of Somerset, who had been sent to the Tower. The Parliament of 1454 was opened by the Duke of York, as the lieutenant of the

king. For some time past, efforts had in vain been made to ascertain the real state of King Henry; twelve peers, who contrived to be admitted to him on the occasion of the death of the chancellor, found him incapable of understanding a word or of replying to their questions. Upon their report, the Parliament nominated Richard of York Protector and defender of the throne of England, upon condition of resigning his dignity in favour of the Prince of Wales, as soon as the latter should attain his majority. York protested his loyalty, and furnished proof of it in the following year, when the king, having recovered his reason, reclaimed the royal power. The first use which he made of his recovered authority was to release the Duke of Somerset. The poor monarch endeavoured to reconcile the two rival Houses; but the Duke of York shortly afterwards affected to believe himself in danger, and again raised some troops. The king marched against him with Somerset; a battle began in the very streets of St. Alban's. The archers of the Duke of York were good marksmen: the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Clifford, fell beneath their arrows; the king himself was wounded. York, seeking him after the victory, found him in bed, in the house of a tanner, and both repaired together to the church, the victor treating with respect the vanquished king. The duke did not immediately take advantage of his success, and contented himself with appearing before the Parliament as the lieutenant of the king. But the Commons claimed for him the title of Protector, and they imposed their will upon the Lords. With the moderation which had always characterized his political conduct, York contented himself with consigning to trustworthy hands some important offices, entrusting the custody of Calais to his brother-in-law and faithful friend, the Earl of Warwick; but he did not wreak revenge upon his enemies, and resigned the power to the king without objection at the beginning of 1456, when the monarch, again cured, wished to take back the authority. Soon, however, Queen Margaret everywhere replaced the friends of York by her favourites; the duke then retired to his estates, and the great

men of his party did likewise, for the relatives of the noblemen slain at St. Alban's spoke aloud of vengeance.

Hopes were still entertained of arriving at some arrangement. In his moments of reason, the king was gentle, charitable, and humane; he endeavoured to re-establish peace around him. York and Warwick had again protested their fidelity towards him. Henry placed himself as arbitrator between the two parties, and decreed certain fines and reparations towards the families of the victims. The victors of St. Alban's accepted these conditions; the king, the queen, the Duke of York, and all the Yorkist and Lancastrian noblemen solemnly repaired to St. Paul's Cathedral; the Duke of York offered his hand to the queen. The Earl of Warwick had remained at Calais.

Fresh quarrels soon brought about fresh insurrections. The two parties reciprocally felt too great a distrust ever to live in peace. In the month of September, 1459, the Earl of Salisbury, brother of Warwick, united his forces to those of the Duke of York, and, after a bloody combat in the environs of Drayton, in Shropshire, where the Lancastrians were defeated, the Earl of Warwick repaired to England with some troops which he had carefully gathered at Calais; but scarcely did his soldiers find themselves in front of the royal standard, when a loyal instinct carried them off into the ranks of the army of Henry VI. The strength of the Duke of York no longer allowed him to keep the field, and on the 20th of November the Parliament convoked by the queen at Coventry accused of high treason the whole families of the Duke of York and the Earl of Salisbury. Warwick retired to Calais, taking with him his brother. When the governor sent by Queen Margaret to supplant him appeared before the town, he was repulsed, and the troops that he had brought went over to Warwick. At the end of June, 1460, the earl reappeared in England; the eldest son of the Duke of York marched at his side. The battle of Northampton placed the poor king in the hands of his enemies, and the queen was compelled to fly with her son into Scotland. A mass of great Lancastrian noblemen had remained upon the field of battle. In

opposition to the great warriors of the preceding centuries, Warwick, the real chief of the Yorkist party, had for maxim to spare the common people, and to strike his enemies ruthlessly down, taking for his victims the men of distinction. Thanks to this practice, imitated by his adversaries, all the great families of England found themselves decimated during the Wars of the Roses.

A new Parliament had been convoked at Westminster. The throne was empty in the House of Lords, when the Duke of York entered therein. He advanced at first resolutely, placed his hand upon the cloth of gold which covered the royal seat, then fell back without mounting it. His course was taken, however, of establishing his rights. The Archbishop of Canterbury inquired of him whether he did not intend to pay a visit to the king, who was in the palace adjoining. "I know no one in this kingdom who should not pay me a visit first," replied the duke; and he established himself in the royal apartment, while Henry occupied that of the queen.

The peers had not responded to this indirect appeal, and on the 16th of October York despatched a message to them, formally laying claim to the crown. The Lords replied that they could not give an opinion without the advice and the consent of the king. Now that he was separated from the queen, who had become more and more unpopular, public feeling began to be agitated in favour of Henry, who was regarded as a saint. But the Duke of York required an answer. When the peers repaired to the captive king, he reminded them that he had received, when quite a child, a crown which had been borne with honour by his father and his grandfather; that it had reposed for forty years upon his brow, and that those even who now wished to snatch it from him, had on several occasions sworn fidelity to him. To these substantial reasons were added attacks against the hereditary rights of the Duke of York, imprudent and puerile conduct which so greatly embarrassed the peers that they called to their aid the judges, then the sergeants of the House, who knew not how to give their advice.



THE CHILD, SPEECHLESS WITH TERROR, THREW HIMSELF UPON HIS KNEES

On the 23rd the Lords presented their objections, frivolous for the most part, with the exception of the oaths taken by all the peers to the House of Lancaster. A compromise was arrived at in the matter; Warwick and York used moderation, and the crown was assured to King Henry during his lifetime. After him it was to return to Richard, duke of York, and his descendants, to the exclusion of the son of Margaret of Anjou.

The negotiators of this curious treaty had reckoned without the queen. She had quitted Scotland, and was endeavouring to assemble all her partisans, to defend the rights of her son. Already the hills and valleys bristled with lances. The Lancastrians were under the sons of the noblemen killed at St. Alban's: the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Clifford were there, thirsting for revenge, notwithstanding all the treaties of pacification. The Duke of York commanded his troops in person; he was as bold upon the field of battle as he was hesitating and prudent in the council. On the 30th of December, 1460, he attacked the enemy at Wakefield, in Yorkshire, with inferior forces, and was completely defeated. He remained himself among the dead, and his friend, the Earl of Salisbury, who was made a prisoner in the flight, was beheaded on the same day at Pontefract. The little Earl of Rutland, second son of the duke, was flying with his tutor, when he was arrested upon Wakefield Bridge by Lord Clifford. The child, speechless with terror, threw himself upon his knees. "It is the son of the Duke of York," cried the priest who accompanied him. "Thy father killed mine," said the fierce baron, "I will kill thee therefore, thee and thine." And plunging his dagger into the bosom of the young prince, he despatched the chaplain to carry to his mother this fearful news. England was not yet accustomed to these scenes of slaughter, and a long cry of horror arose in the country when the news of the death of Rutland was known, and when above the gates of York was seen the disfigured head of the duke, surmounted by a crown of paper. Margaret and her partisans had become intoxicated

with the cup of revenge, without thinking of the terrible reprisals which awaited them.

Already the young Earl of March, the eldest son of the Duke of York, had gained, on the 1st of February, at Mortimer's Cross, near Wigmore, a bloody victory, where perished a great number of royalists. All the prisoners of mark, amongst whom was Owen Tudor, father-in-law of King Henry VI., were beheaded after the battle, as though to appease the shades of the Yorkists who had fallen at Wakefield. This success counterbalanced the effect of a victory gained on the 17th of February, over Warwick, by Queen Margaret, between St. Alban's and Barnet. The earl was compelled to retreat so promptly, that King Henry, forgotten in the tumult, found himself alone in his tent with his chamberlain, when his wife came to take possession of him before causing her prisoners to be executed. Five days later a proclamation of King Henry announced to his people that he had subscribed under constraint to the recent arrangements for the succession to the throne, and that he retracted them without reserve, declaring Edward, formerly Earl of March, a false traitor, "it being the duty of every subject of the king to hasten against him."

The Earl of March was about to hurl back on his enemies the title of traitor and to put a price upon their heads. He had joined the Earl of Warwick, and their united forces exceeded those of the queen. London was favourable to the change of dynasty, and the cruelties practised in the country by the troops that the queen had brought from the frontiers of Scotland, rallied peasants around the Yorkists. Their forces went on increasing, and when, on the 25th of February, they approached St. Alban's, where Queen Margaret was with her army, she found herself compelled to retreat before them. Edward, Earl of March, had none of the scruples and hesitation of his father; he was resolved to seize immediately upon the throne. Traversing St. Alban's as a conqueror and a king, he advanced immediately towards London, and he entered there triumphantly, to the great joy of the people, "who came every

day from all the country surrounding," says the chronicler, "to see this handsome and magnificent prince, the flower of chivalry, he in whom they hoped for their joy and tranquillity."

A grand review had been announced in St. John's Fields; the crowd of citizens thronged to witness this warlike spectacle. Suddenly Lord Falconberg and the Bishop of Exeter, brother of the Earl of Warwick, addressed themselves to the crowd: "You know of the incapacity of King Henry," they said, "the injustice of the usurpation which had placed his family upon the throne, and to what extent you have been misgoverned and oppressed. Will you have this king to reign over you still?" "No, no," cried the mob. The bishop began speaking again, depicting the valour, the talent, the activity of the Earl of March. "Will you have King Edward to reign over you, and serve, love, and honour him?" "Yes!" replied the people; "long live King Edward." On the morrow, the 2nd of March, a great council of the Lords spiritual and temporal declared that Henry of Lancaster had failed in his engagements, by uniting himself to the forces of the queen, and by retracting his oath for the succession to the throne. By this conduct, he had lost his rights to the crown, which belonged henceforth to the heir of the Duke of York, whose pretensions had been recognized as legitimate. The consent of the Commons, who were convoked later in the Parliament, was dispensed with. On the 4th of March Edward, followed by a royal retinue, repaired to Westminster, and immediately taking possession of that throne which his father had formerly touched with a hesitating hand, he himself explained to the assembly the rights of his house. Having been several times interrupted by plaudits, he repaired to church, where he held the same discourse. A few hours later the heralds proclaimed King Edward IV. in all the public places of London, and the people responded with their cries of joy, "Long live King Edward."



CHAPTER XIV.

RED ROSE AND WHITE ROSE

EDWARD IV (1461—1483). EDWARD V. (1483) RICHARD III (1483—1485).

IF the throne of Henry IV. had always appeared to him unsteady, from the morrow of a usurpation which had not caused a single drop of blood to be shed, that of Edward IV., based upon a transitory success of his arms, was destined to cost much bloodshed and many tears to England. The coronation rejoicings were immediately followed by a renewal of the hostilities. Scarcely had he been proclaimed when the new king left London. Queen Margaret and the Duke of Somerset had assembled their troops in the environs of York, and were preparing to march upon the capital. Edward, upon the advice of Warwick, did not allow them time for that purpose. The northern counties were in general favourably disposed towards the Red Rose, and the two armies were more considerable than ever, when they met on the 28th of March near Towton. The snow fell in abundance and blinded the combatants, but their fury knew no obstacle. The struggle

lasted from nine o'clock in the morning until three, when the Lancastrians, broken up and disbanded, attempted to fly. The river Cock was a barrier wherein many of their number were drowned. The Earl of Northumberland and six barons had remained upon the field of battle; the Earls of Devonshire and Wiltshire were captured and beheaded; their heads replaced those of the Duke Richard and the Earl of Rutland upon the gates of York. Thirty-eight thousand combatants, it is said, perished on this fatal day: the Hundred Years' War had not cost as much blood to England as a single battle in the civil war. Queen Margaret, her husband, and her son, accompanied by the Dukes of Somerset and Exeter, took refuge in Scotland. Edward IV., triumphant, returned to London, there to conclude the ceremony of his coronation. Formally recognized by the Parliament, no allusion was made to the intellectual weakness of King Henry or to the misgovernment of the queen and her favourites: all the arguments were confined to the legitimate rights to the throne asserted by the House of York in the person of King Edward. Henry and all his family were declared usurpers, and their partisans were all included in the same sentence: those of the Lancastrian barons who had not perished upon the field of battle were condemned to death; all their property was to be confiscated and their families degraded. Edward IV. was anxious to crush his enemies by a single blow.

Betrayed by the fortune of war and abandoned by her terrified partisans, Queen Margaret knew neither discouragement nor fatigue. Closely linked to the Scotch by an old alliance which she had sealed by ceding to them the town of Berwick, she essayed, with their assistance, two or three incursions into the northern counties of England; but her mediocre success decided her to seek help in her native country, France, where she had rendered many services and retained many friends. In the month of April, 1462, she embarked at Kircudbright, and landed in Brittany. The duke presented her with twelve thousand golden crowns, and she took the road to Chinon, where the court of France was situated. Charles VII. was dead, and Louis XI.

had succeeded him. A cold politician, he was too shrewd to allow himself to be inveigled by the tears and the beauty of the queen into a disastrous war: he therefore at the outset refused all assistance; but when she spoke of ceding Calais as the price of his services, the monarch somewhat relaxed his sternness, gave some money to the queen, and permitted her to recruit soldiers in his kingdom. A famous knight, René de Brézé, seneschal of Normandy, ardently devoted to Margaret, placed himself at the head of the two thousand men that he had raised for her, partly at his own expense; a few vessels were equipped, and the queen started on her return to Scotland. The English exiles and a certain number of irregular border troops in a short time joined her, and three fortresses of Northumberland fell into her hands. But the Earl of Warwick was advancing with an army of twenty thousand men; the Lancastrians divided their forces in order to preserve their conquests; the queen regained her vessels. The waves were as hostile to her as the land; the ships were destroyed in a storm; the queen and Brézé arrived at Berwick in a fishing-smack; five hundred French troops, which she had left behind her to defend Holy Island, were slaughtered to a man, and the three castles were compelled to surrender after a vigorous resistance. They had capitulated upon honourable terms. The Duke of Somerset and Sir Richard Percy made their submission to King Edward, who admitted them to mercy, while Margaret was wandering with the seneschal upon the frontiers of England, in vain endeavouring to rally her scattered and terrified adherents. It was in this winter campaign, one day in December, that the queen, accompanied only by her son and a feeble following, fell into the hands of a band of brigands. She had been stripped of everything, her attendants were killed or captured, and she was attempting to fly with her son, when another bandit pounced upon her. Margaret turned round, and taking the little prince by the hand, she advanced resolutely towards the outlaw, "Here is the son of your king," she said; "I confide him to you." All generous feeling had not been extinguished in the soul of the brigand: he extended his

protection to the mother and the child, gave them the shelter of his hut for the night, and on the morrow conducted them to the outskirts of the forest. King Henry had been conveyed to Wales and placed in a fortress, while Queen Margaret was recrossing the sea to seek fresh assistance on the Continent. She remained there for a long while. Louis XI. rarely supported the unfortunate; the Duke Philip of Burgundy did not wish to set himself at variance with England, whose commerce was of importance to his dominions, and the poor princess, supported by a few secret gifts, royal alms which scarcely sufficed for her subsistence, took refuge in the Duchy of Bar, which still belonged to her father. There she was unceasing in her efforts to find enemies for King Edward and partisans for her husband and her son.

Meanwhile the war had recommenced, without her, in England, and struck the last blow to her hopes. The Duke of Somerset and Percy had again revolted, and in the month of April, 1464, King Henry, dragged from his peaceful retreat, was brought to the camp of his partisans. Lord Montague, the younger brother of the Earl of Warwick, assembled together the Yorkists, and on the 25th of April at Hedgleymoor, and on the 15th of May at Hexham, the two Lancastrian corps were defeated in succession. Percy died fighting; the Duke of Somerset, Lord de Roos, and Lord Hungerford were executed; Sir Ralph Grey, formerly a Yorkist, and since become a Lancastrian in consequence of a disappointment in ambition, was captured at Bamborough by the Earl of Warwick, and suffered the doom of traitors. Animosities and the vengeances were accumulating for the future, but the present seemed to smile upon King Edward: King Henry had wandered during two months in Lancashire and Westmoreland, from castle to castle, from cottage to cottage, without any one dreaming of betraying him, without meeting a heart hard enough to refuse succour and protection to him. At length, in the month of July, he was seized, delivered up to his enemies and conducted to the Tower. The war had become very cruel, and the troops had grown accustomed to many

crimes, but none dared to lay a hand upon "the sacred head of the peaceful usurper," as Shakspeare calls him; the halo of his fervent piety protected him against all violence. He led a peaceful life in his prison, while Edward IV. was demolishing with his own hands the throne which he had conquered at the cost of so many sufferings. The Duchess of Bedford, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, had had several children by her marriage with Sir Richard Woodville. The eldest of her daughters, Elizabeth, married at an early age to Sir John Grey, who was killed at the second battle of St. Alban's in the ranks of the Lancastrians, begged of the king the restitution of her property. She was beautiful, skilful, ambitious: Edward IV. conceived an affection for her, and secretly married her on the 1st of May, 1464. It was on the 29th of September only that he dared to declare this union to his brothers, the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, and to his redoubtable ally, the Earl of Warwick, or the "Kingmaker," as he was called. Their dissatisfaction was great, but they contrived to restrain it. Elizabeth Woodville was solemnly recognized, in the month of December, at a great national council; and on the 25th of May following she was crowned at Westminster with the usual ceremonies. Her uncle, James of Luxembourg, had come to England upon this occasion in order to raise the family of the new queen a little. "Her father, Sir Richard, was but an esquire in our remembrance," it was said among the people. Future splendours were destined to efface the meanness of the origin. With Elizabeth his family ascended the throne, Sir Richard was made Earl of Rivers, and soon afterwards constable; the queen married her sisters to the heirs of the noblest houses. Offices, honours poured down upon the Greys and Woodvilles; and the Nevils, formerly all-powerful by right of their services and their swords, saw their influence decrease day by day; the king no longer asked their advice, and did not trouble himself as to their inclination. An annoying incident raised their anger to the highest pitch.

Warwick had for some time been engaged in negotiations for the marriage of the Princess Margaret of York, sister of Edward,

with a prince of the royal house of France. The alliance of the princess was equally sought by the Count of Charolais, son of the Duke of Burgundy; but the "Great Earl" was opposed to this marriage, and, authorized by Edward, he repaired to France to conclude terms with King Louis XI. He resided at Rouen in the month of June, 1467, beside the royal palace, and the King of France saw him at all hours of the day and night, in great intimacy, negotiating with that air of mystery which he loved to wear everywhere. Warwick was on his return to London, in the month of July, accompanied by the ambassadors of France, entrusted to conclude the royal alliance, when he learnt that the Bastard of Burgundy had been at the court for several days past under the pretext of a passage of arms, and that the marriage of Margaret of York with the Count of Charolais was almost decided upon. The last obstacle disappeared when the Duke Philip died suddenly, on the 15th of July, leaving to his son vast dominions, a rich treasury, and a position in Europe superior to that of the greater number of the crowned heads. The indignation of Warwick was not the less ardent: he complained of having been deceived, and retired to his castle of Midleham. King Edward feigned to be uneasy at the anger of the Earl: he doubled his guards and a rumour was spread that Warwick had been won over to the House of Lancaster by King Louis XI. Warwick returned for a moment at the entreaty of his brother, the Archbishop of York; but the Woodvilles remained all powerful, and the breach became wider every day: Edward with difficulty endured the haughty independence of the man who had made him king; he saw him now, supported by the Duke of Clarence, the heir presumptive to the throne (Elizabeth had had daughters only), who had recently married, at Calais, Lady Isabel, the eldest daughter of Warwick. An insurrection broke out almost at the same moment in Yorkshire, directed especially against the relatives of Queen Elizabeth, who were accused of oppression. Lord Montague, who was present in the North, did not endeavour to oppose the movement, which spread with such rapidity that the king,

having arrived at Newark, was compelled to retreat precipitately to Nottingham. He wrote with his own hand to Calais, begging the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick to come to his aid. But before their arrival the insurgents had defeated the Earl of Pembroke at Edgecote, on the 26th of July. Being captured in the pursuit, Earl Rivers and Sir John Woodville, the father and brother of the queen, as well as the Earl of Devon, had been beheaded. It was affirmed that the rebels were acting in concert with Warwick. When he at length landed in England, the king was almost alone at Olney, and the insurgents were advancing against him, but the presence of the Earl soon caused them to retreat. As they returned to their farms and heaths, Warwick conducted Edward IV. to Midleham, the prisoner of his deliverers. England had two kings, both captives.

Warwick did not yet think of changing the rose which he wore upon his helmet: a fresh insurrection of the partisans of Henry VI. compelled him to march against them. But the army murmured at the captivity of the king: it was necessary to show him to the troops, and the Lancastrians being defeated, harmony appeared to be re-established between the king and the earl. Edward re-entered London: he had purchased his liberty by great gifts. The reconciliation was, however, only apparent: two or three fresh quarrels ended in a victory of the king over the insurgents of Lincolnshire, who were secretly abetted by Clarence and Warwick. Edward accused them publicly of high treason. The earl did not feel himself powerful enough to struggle arms in hand; he embarked for Calais; but the news of his rebellion had preceded him there; the cannon of the town were pointed against his vessels, and the lieutenant whom he had himself chosen denied him the entrance to the port. The Duchess of Clarence brought into the world her first-born son in her ship, before the town, and it was with great difficulty that a glass of wine was obtained to restore strength to her: "which was," says Commynes, "great severity for a servant to show towards his lord."

Warwick sought a refuge beside King Louis XI. The friendly

relations which he had contracted with him had never been broken off: the astute monarch received the fugitives and installed them, at first, at Valognes; he next received them at Tours and at Amboise, notwithstanding the anger of the Duke of Burgundy, several of whose vessels had been captured by Warwick. By way of reprisal, the French merchants who had repaired to the fair at Antwerp had been cast into prison by Charles the Bold. Louis XI. ridiculed this act and continued to shuffle the cards, hoping to secure the help of England against the duke, when the Kingmaker should have become once more all-powerful in his country.

It was at Amboise that Warwick and Queen Margaret met secretly, through the agency of the King of France. For fifteen years past the queen had attributed all her misfortunes to Warwick; the earl had not forgotten that she had sent to the scaffold his father, his brother, and his best friends; but a common and a more fervent hatred united them. Margaret consented to the marriage of Prince Edward, her son, with the second daughter of the earl, who thus assured the crown to his children, should he either succeed in overthrowing Edward IV. in favour of the Lancastrians, or should he be induced to place Clarence upon the throne. Thanks to Louis XI., they contrived for the time being to amuse or to quiet the Duke of Clarence, notwithstanding all the efforts that the king his brother made to sever him from his allies, and Warwick shortly afterwards set sail, furnished with men and money. Charles of Burgundy had in vain placed in the Channel a fleet destined to arrest him; the earl landed on the 13th of September, 1470, upon the coast of Devonshire, and the entire population hastened under his banners. Sermons were preached in London in favour of King Henry, and Warwick turned his steps in the direction of the Trent. Edward IV. had been summoned to the North a short time before by a fresh insurrection; but the soldiers convoked under the banner of the White Rose did not respond to the appeal; those who hitherto had marched with Edward abandoned him. Warwick continued to advance; the position of King Edward became

desperate. He was brave and resolute, but he took the course of flying. Two little Dutch vessels lay moored on the coast, at the mouth of the Wash: he threw himself into them with a few friends, without money and without resources, and crowded sail for the Low Countries, with great difficulty escaping the pirates who infested the seas. He landed near Alkmaar, and the governor "immediately sent tidings to the Duke of Burgundy, who would as well have liked to learn the death of the king," says Commines, "for he was in great apprehension of the Earl of Warwick, who was his enemy and had become all-powerful in England." In effect, everybody in London cried, "Long live King Henry!" Warwick had released from the Tower the poor monarch whom he himself had led there five years before. Queen Elizabeth Woodville had shut herself up in Westminster Abbey with her mother and her three daughters. It was there that she gave birth to a son, a new pretender to the throne, whom the Duke of Clarence looked upon with as much disfavour as upon the restoration of Henry VI. Louis XI. caused thanksgivings to be offered up to God in all the churches of France for the great victory gained by Henry of Lancaster, the legitimate King of England, over the usurping traitor, the Earl of March. The joy of the king was the more keen inasmuch as Warwick had already returned to him a portion of the money which he had borrowed. In reality, some pirates had seized the vessel and the gold which it carried, but the good intention of the earl was evident, and Louis XI. reckoned upon receiving back his advances, while assuring the power to the enemies of his good cousin of Burgundy; the politic monarch rubbed his hands.

Meanwhile affairs had already changed their aspect in England. As Louis XI. had assisted Warwick, the Duke of Burgundy assisted Edward: he had given him vessels and a small army corps, besides hiring for his service a certain number of pirates. It was with these feeble resources that Edward IV. disembarked on the 16th of March at Ravenspur, where Bolingbroke had landed seventy-two years before to dethrone King Richard II. The reception accorded by the people was not encouraging; none

planted the White Rose. Edward no longer spoke of his rights to the throne; he wished only, he said, to reclaim his title of Duke of York. But when he had crossed the Trent he found himself surrounded by his partisans: every day his forces continued to swell. The Marquis of Montague, brother of Warwick, had suffered him to pass. Before arriving at Coventry he had resumed all the royal insignia. The army of Warwick was coming to encounter him; but scarcely had the two parties found themselves face to face, when the Duke of Clarence went over, with all his troops, to the side of his brother. Thus weakened, Warwick was compelled to retreat without fighting. Edward marched upon London, where he was received by the acclamations of the populace. The sermons preached from the cross at St. Paul's in favour of King Henry, and the open hospitality of the Earl of Warwick, had already been forgotten. A son had been born to King Edward, who had not yet seen him, and "the wealthy merchants who had lent money to him," says Commines, "hoped to be paid when he should have regained possession of the throne." The wives of the great citizens were accustomed to his acts of gallantry. London was merrymaking, but the Lancastrians were already in battle array on the plain of Barnet, within five leagues of the capital. Edward marched against them with the Duke of Clarence. The latter was troubled and uneasy: his wife was a daughter of Warwick, and she had great influence over him; he caused a proposal for his mediation to be made to his father-in-law. "Tell your master," cried the earl in indignation, "that Warwick is faithful to his oath, and is better than the treacherous and perfidious Clarence. He has referred this to the sword, which will decide the quarrel." It was on Easter day: the morrow was awaited for the fight.

The struggle began on the 14th of April, at daybreak. Warwick always fought on horseback; but his brother, Lord Montague, who had joined him, urged him to dismount. "Charge at the head of your men-at-arms," he said. Edward IV. was present in person among his partisans, sword in hand, doing good work. It was not long before Warwick was killed

as well as his brother; but the rout of the Lancastrians did not stay the slaughter: on returning from Flanders, King Edward had resolved no longer to spare, as formerly, the common people; he had conceived a great hatred of the peasants, so often favourable to his enemies. The field of battle was covered with corpses, when Edward IV. re-entered into London, bringing with him the body of the Kingmaker, which was exposed during three days at Westminster, in order that all might assure themselves of his death. King Henry had been reconducted to the Tower.

Edward IV. had not yet triumphed over his most implacable adversary. Queen Margaret, who had been detained upon the coast of France by contrary winds, landed in England on the very day of the battle of Barnet. She soon learnt that her friends had been beaten, that Warwick was killed, that King Henry was again a prisoner. She advanced, however, with her son and the auxiliaries whom she had brought from the Continent. The population was hostile to her; she found the fords and bridges of the Severn defended by her enemies, and was unable to join Lord Pembroke, who still held out in Wales. On the 4th of May, Margaret met King Edward, near Tewkesbury. Her troops had skilfully intrenched themselves, but the Duke of Somerset wished to make the attack in the open: a small number of soldiers followed him, and when he attempted to fall back upon his ranks, the Duke of Gloucester had already broken through them. The queen and the prince were made prisoners. The young pretender was brought to Edward. "Who conducted you hither?" cried the king angrily "My right and the crown of my father," said the son of Margaret proudly. Edward struck him upon the mouth with his iron gauntlet; the prince staggered, the servants of the king threw themselves upon him and slaughtered him. The great noblemen who accompanied Margaret had taken refuge in Tewkesbury church. The respect accorded to the sacred precincts had protected the wife and the children of King Edward while his enemies were all powerful in London; but no consideration divine or human could stay him: he entered the church sword in hand. A

priest, holding aloft the host, threw himself between the king and his victims: he succeeded in arresting him for a moment; an amnesty was even promised; but, two days later, all the Lancastrians who had taken refuge in Tewkesbury church were dragged forcibly therefrom, and were beheaded.

Queen Margaret had followed her conqueror: her haughty courage had resisted all defeats, all treacheries: she did not succumb beneath the last misfortune. She lived for five years a prisoner, alone and poor, first at the Tower, then at Windsor, and finally at Wallingford. King Louis XI. at length obtained her liberty: she returned to France there to live for several years more. She died in 1482. The king, her husband, had not survived the battle of Tewkesbury: on the morrow of the triumphal entry of Edward IV. into London, Henry VI. was found dead in the Tower; it was said that the Duke of Gloucester had stabbed him with his own hands. Remorse for this crime perhaps pursued him: when he was king, Richard III. caused the body of Henry VI. to be removed from the abbey of Chertsey, where it had been deposited; the bones of the holy king, it was said, accomplished miracles. When Henry VII. wished to bring them back to Westminster, they could not be found.

The White Rose triumphed everywhere. The great Lancastrian noblemen were dead or prisoners; the Earl of Pembroke and some others had succeeded in taking refuge upon the Continent; the little Prince of Wales had been declared heir presumptive to the throne by the great council of the peers; but the king and his brothers could not live in peace. Clarence and Gloucester were contending with each other for the inheritance of the Earl of Warwick. Gloucester had married the Princess Anne, widow of the young Edward, assassinated at Tewkesbury. In vain had Clarence concealed her; Gloucester had pursued his prey even under the disguise of a servant, and King Edward had been compelled to divide between the two rivals the property of the "great earl," leaving his widow in veritable misery; "for," says Commines, "among all the sovereignties in the

world of which I have knowledge where public affairs are best managed, that in which there is the least violence towards the people, where there are no buildings cast down or demolished for war, is England; but misfortune and fate fall upon those who have caused the war." The House of the Nevilles was ruined; the enmity between the two brothers of the king was not less on that ground: it was to bring about fresh crimes.

The internal struggles appeared to be drawing to an end. King Edward began to return to external wars; the Duke of Burgundy urged him to lend him his co-operation against Louis XI. Edward crossed the sea with a small army and went to Calais; but "before he started from Dover," writes Commines, "he sent to the king our lord one single herald, named Jarretière, who was a native of Normandy. He brought to the king a written challenge from the King of England, in beautiful language and in a beautiful style; and I think that never had Englishman put his hand to it." Edward publicly claimed the kingdom of France as his possession, "in order that he might restore the Church, the nobles, and the people to their former liberty," he said. The king read the letter in private, then retired to his closet, "tout fin seul;" he caused the herald to be summoned thither. "Your king does not come here of his own accord," he said to Jarretière, "he is constrained by the Duke of Burgundy." And proceeding from this to make overtures of friendship to the King of England, "he gave to the said herald three hundred crowns, counting them with his own hand, and promised him a thousand of them if the arrangement should be made, and publicly caused a beautiful piece of crimson velvet, consisting af thirty ells, to be given to him."

Jarretière, thus treated, advised King Louis XI. to enter into relations with Lord Howard or Lord Stanley, favourite ministers of Edward, who were not in favour of the war. The English forces which had recently arrived in Calais were more considerable than had at first been believed in France; the King of England had concluded a truce with Scotland, and he had imposed on his vassals and the great citizens a new species of tax, under the



INTERVIEW OF EDWARD IV. AND LOUIS XI. AT PECQUIGNY.

form of free gifts, called "benevolences." Fifteen or eighteen thousand men were assembled at Calais; but the Duke of Burgundy had dissipated his resources elsewhere, and he presented himself at the place of meeting with a handful of soldiers. The discontent which this deception caused to King Edward inclined him to lend an ear to the proposals of Louis XI. The English army had been inactive at Péronne for two months, and the gold of the King of France circulated freely among the courtiers of Edward. Fifty thousand crowns had already been promised for the ransom of Queen Margaret, when the two sovereigns met at Pecquigny, on each side of a barrier, upon a bridge thrown across the Somme. "In the middle was a trellis, such as are made in the cages of lions, and there were no holes between the bars larger than to allow one's arm to be put in with ease." King Louis arrived first, having taken the precaution, on that day, to cause Commines to be clad in the same manner as himself, "for he had long been accustomed to have somebody who dressed similarly to himself." The King of England entered, accompanied by his chamberlain, Lord Hastings: "He was a very handsome prince, and tall, but he began to grow fat, and I had formerly seen him more handsome; for I have no remembrance of ever having seen a more handsome man than he was when Lord Warwick made him fly from England. They embraced through the apertures; the King of England made a profound reverence, and the king began to speak, saying, 'My cousin, welcome; there is no man in the world whom I should so much desire to see as you, and praised be God for that we are here assembled with such good intent.' The King of England replied upon this point in pretty good French."

King Louis had invited Edward IV. to come and see him in Paris, but he was rather uneasy lest his politeness should be accepted. "He is a very handsome king," he said to Commines, "he greatly loves the ladies; he might find one among them in Paris who might say so many fine words to him that she would make him wish to return. His predecessors have been too much in Paris and in Normandy. His company is

worth nothing on this side of the sea; beyond it, I am quite willing to have him for a good brother and friend." All the efforts of Louis XI. tended to conclude the treaty as soon as possible, in order to see the English return to their country; and for this purpose, he lavished the treasures amassed with so much care. A pension of fifty thousand livres was assured to King Edward; the hand of the dauphin was promised to Princess Elizabeth; the great noblemen of the English court had pensions and presents like their master, and a truce of seven years was signed. The people murmured in England; for the extent of the preparations and the importance of the sums obtained by Edward had created hopes for at least the conquest of Anjou, Maine, Normandy, and Guienne. The French noblemen despised the policy of their king, who purchased the retreat of his enemies instead of repulsing them by arms; but Edward had recrossed the sea, and Louis XI. paid the pensions regularly; he even went so far as to demand a receipt, "and despatched Maître Pierre Clairet to Lord Hastings, the great chamberlain, to remit two thousand crowns in gold "au soleil" to him; for in no other kind was money ever given to great foreign noblemen. And the said Clairet requested that he would deliver to him a letter of three lines, informing the king how he had received them, for the said nobleman was suspicious. But the chamberlain replied, 'My lord master, that which you say is very reasonable; but this gift comes of the good pleasure of the king your lord. If it please you that I take it, you will place it here in my sleeve and will have no letter or acknowledgment for it, for I will not have it said, "The great chamberlain of the King of England has been a pensioner of the King of France," or that my receipts should be found in his exchequer chamber.' With which the king was much incensed, but commended and esteemed the said chamberlain for it, and always paid him without a receipt."

The Duke Charles the Bold had recently perished, at the battle of Nancy, in his campaign against the Duke René of Lorraine (1477). His only daughter, Mary of Burgundy, inherited his vast dominions. The Duke of Clarence, a widower

since the recent death of the daughter of Warwick at once claimed the hand of the young duchess. He was already in bad odour at court, and this act of ambition excited the jealousy of the king his brother. Clarence was violent: he complained of the injustice used towards two of his servants, who had been accused of sorcery, condemned and executed. He protested so loudly, that the king caused him to be arrested in his turn, and, accusing him of treason, ordered him to be imprisoned in the Tower. The prince appeared before the peers, being prosecuted by the king in person: no baron opened his mouth for his defence; but Clarence protested his innocence at each accusation of magic, rebellion, and conspiracy. Nevertheless the peers declared him guilty, and the House of Commons insisted shortly afterwards upon the carrying out of the sentence. The trial had been public; the execution was secret: on the 18th of February, the report of the death of the duke spread through London. None knew how he had died, but it was related among the people that the Duke of Gloucester had caused him to be drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine. The well-known tastes of the unhappy duke had no doubt brought about this supposition, for the most absolute mystery continues to reign over the fate of Clarence. Richard, duke of Gloucester, maintained the best relations with the queen, and he received of the king a large portion of the estates confiscated from Clarence, while Edward continued to lead a life of feasting and debauchery, everywhere surrounded by ladies whom he treated magnificently, causing silken tents to be set up for them "when he went to the hunting-field," says Commines; "for no man humoured so much his inclination."

Meanwhile war had recommenced with Scotland. King James I. had succumbed beneath the dagger of assassins in 1437. His son James II., whose long minority and bad government had thrown Scotland back into the disorder which his father had attempted to dispel, had died in 1460, through the explosion of a cannon which he was testing. James III., who had succeeded him while yet a child, was gentle and timid, little suited to impose his will upon his turbulent barons. Meanwhile the Duke

of Gloucester, entrusted by his brother to support the war, had achieved no success; but the treason of the Duke of Albany, brother of James III., opened up new hopes to England in 1482. Berwick had been delivered up to Gloucester, and the King of Scotland, having advanced to repulse the English, saw his favourite Cochrane carried off by the conspirators, who hung him upon Lauder bridge and took James as their prisoner to Edinburgh. He was still detained in the castle, when the Duke of Gloucester entered the capital with the Duke of Albany. But the presence of an English army opened the eyes of the Scottish barons: they came to an understanding with Albany, who returned into favour with his brother. King James was restored to liberty and the English retired, by means of the cession of the town of Berwick and a promise of certain sums of money. Gloucester re-entered London, where King Edward was meditating a fresh war.

The Princess Elizabeth was sixteen years of age: for ten years past already she had been betrothed to the dauphin, but King Louis did not claim his daughter-in-law. A rumour was even abroad that he had entered into negotiations with the Duke Maximilian of Austria, in order to obtain the hand of the Princess Margaret, the only daughter left to him by Mary of Burgundy, who had died through a fall from a horse in the month of February, 1482. While all the princes of Europe were contending against each other for the heiress of the Dukes of Burgundy, Louis XI. had stealthily taken possession of a portion of her dominions, and it was these conquests that he claimed to have recognized as a dowry to "Margot, the gentle damsel," as Margaret of Austria was called. The little princess was but three years of age; but the towns of Flanders which held her in custody, accepted the French alliance rejected by Maximilian, and consigned Margaret of Austria into the hands of Louis XI. During all these negotiations the King of France had contrived to amuse Edward IV. by purchasing the silence of Lord Howard, the ambassador at Paris; but when the marriage contract was solemnly celebrated at Paris, "with great festivals

and solemnities, King Edward was much irritated therewith. Whoever had joy in this marriage, it displeased the king of England bitterly," says Commines, "for he held it as so great a shame and mockery, and conceived so great a grief for it, as soon as he learnt the news of it, that he fell ill and died therefrom, although others say that it was a catarrh." King Edward IV. was not yet forty-one, when he expired on the 9th of April, 1483, repenting, it was said, of all the wrong that he had done, and ordering his debts to be paid to all those of whom he had extorted money; but the treasury was empty, and the injured persons were obliged to content themselves with the repentance and the good will of the dying sovereign. Cruel and suspicious, avaricious, prodigal, and debauched, King Edward IV. had no other quality than the bravery which had placed him upon the throne; he left two sons, aged thirteen and eleven years, unhappy children, confided to an imprudent and frivolous mother, and to an uncle as ambitious as corrupt.

At the moment when King Edward was dying in London, his brother Richard, duke of Gloucester, was upon the frontiers of Scotland, at the head of the army, and the Prince of Wales was at Ludlow Castle, the residence of his uncle, Lord Rivers. While the young king was returning slowly to the capital, accompanied by a small body of troops, the Duke of Gloucester, in great mourning, repaired to York with a numerous escort, caused the Church ceremonials to be solemnly celebrated in honour of the deceased monarch, made oath of fidelity to his nephew, caused all the noblemen of the environs to make it, and wrote to his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Woodville, to assure her of his sentiments, and to place himself at her disposition. Already, however, notwithstanding the reconciliation which had taken place beside the deathbed of Edward IV., suspicions and discord reigned between the party of the Queen and the old favourite of her husband. Lord Hastings, High Chamberlain of England, wrote to the Duke of Gloucester, and the Duke of Buckingham, a prince of the royal house, a descendant of Thomas de Woodstock, the youngest son of Edward III., had received the

emissaries of the crafty Richard. The young king and his uncle met on the 25th of April at Stoney-Stratford; on the preceding evening, the Duke of Gloucester had received at Northampton the visit of the Lords Rivers and Grey, and had cordially entertained them, as well as the Duke of Buckingham, who had arrived at his residence after them. But scarcely did Richard find himself in the presence of the little Edward V. and holding him in his power, when he accused Lord Rivers of having endeavoured to alienate the affections of his nephew from him; and he caused him to be arrested, as well as Lord Grey and several personages of the royal house. Gloucester and Buckingham bent their knees before the young king, saluting him as their sovereign; but the sovereign was a prisoner and was taken to London, while his uncle and his servants were being conducted to Pontefract Castle of lugubrious memory.

The rumour of these arrests had already reached the capital. Queen Elizabeth, alarmed, had retired into Westminster Abbey with her second son. Hastings, a traitor or a dupe, assured the population of the city that the two dukes were acting only in the interest of the public welfare. He set out to meet the young king, while the agents of Gloucester were spreading in London violent accusations against the queen, who had, it was said, plotted with her relatives for the death of the princes of the blood, in order to be able to govern the king at her pleasure. There were even shown the casks filled with arms which she had, it was said, amassed in order to destroy her enemies. The people began to declare that all these traitors must be hanged. The arrival of the little king was announced.

He made his entry into London on the 5th of June, magnificently dressed and mounted upon a beautiful horse. His uncle preceded him, bareheaded, with all the marks of the most affectionate respect. Edward V. at first took up his abode in the palace of the bishop, then, upon the proposal which the Duke of Buckingham made to the council, he was transported to the Tower for greater security. The assembly of peers awarded to the Duke of Gloucester the title of Protector and Defender of

the kingdom, and he installed himself in one of the royal palaces, where the crowd of his courtiers thronged. A small number of noblemen, at the head of whom was Lord Hastings, met together at the Tower. "I know everything that goes forward at the duke's," said the high chamberlain of Edward IV. to Lord Stanley, who was uneasy at the machinations of Richard. He was not aware, however, of the imminence of the danger that threatened him.

On the 12th of June Richard entered the council of the Tower with a serene countenance; he chatted gaily with the peers who surrounded him. "My lord," he said to the Bishop of Ely, "it is said that the strawberries of your garden in Holborn are excellent." "I will send and get some if it please your highness," replied the prelate. While the strawberries were being gathered, the Protector had gone out; when he returned, his face had become overcast. "What do traitors who plot for my destruction deserve?" he exclaimed on entering. "Death!" replied Lord Hastings, without hesitating. "That sorceress, the wife of my brother," replied Richard, "and that other sorceress who is always with her, Mistress Shore, have no other aim but to rid themselves of me; see how, with their enchantments, they have already destroyed and consumed my body!" And he raised his left sleeve exposing his arm, emaciated and withered to the elbow. None uttered a word; all knew that the duke had been born with his arm thus deformed. He was tall, like his brothers; his countenance was handsome, but he was hunchbacked and his features had never expressed a more bitter malignity than at the moment when, turning towards Hastings, he repeated his question. "I' faith they deserve death, my lord, if they have thus plotted against you." "*If!*" repeated the Protector, "why do you use *ifs* and *buts* to me? I will prove upon thy body the truth of that which I say, traitor that thou art!" And he struck a heavy blow upon the table angrily; at the same instant the door opened, and a band of armed men precipitated themselves into the council-chamber. "Traitor, I arrest you!" said Richard,

taking Hastings by the collar. A soldier had raised his battle-axe to Lord Stanley, but he had taken refuge under the table; he was seized, however, and taken to prison, as well as the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Ely. "As to my lord chamberlain," said Gloucester, "let him hasten to have himself absolved, for, by St. Paul, I will not sit down to table while he has his head upon his shoulders." A few moments later the unhappy Hastings, dragged by the soldiers into the courtyard of the chapel, was beheaded upon the trunk of a tree which was there. On the same day, by order of Sir Richard Ratcliffe, who presented himself at Pontefract at the head of a body of troops, Lord Rivers, Lord Grey, Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Sir Thomas Hawse were executed before the castle, in public, but without their being able to address a word to the crowd which thronged around the scaffold, for "Ratcliffe had for a long time been in the confidence of the Duke," says a chronicler, "and he was a man having experience of the world, of a crafty mind and a bold tongue, as far removed from all pity as he was from the fear of God.

Meanwhile the Protector had repaired to Westminster with the Archbihsop of Canterbury and several peers and noblemen, demanding that Queen Elizabeth should at once consign to him the person of the Duke of York, whose company his brother wished for and whose absence from the coronation would cause grievous and calumniatory rumours to be circulated against the Protector. The queen was defenceless; she had no party in the city, her relatives and friends were dead or prisoners; she yielded, tearfully embracing the son who yet remained to her and who was doubtless being snatched away from her for his ruin. The little Duke of York went and joined his brother at the Tower.

Mistress Jane Shore, the favourite of Edward IV., had been condemned to do public penance for her bad conduct and sorcery; she had traversed the streets of London barefooted and in a sheet, with a taper in her hand, afterwards to take refuge, deprived of all her riches, in a humble house into which she was received in charity. It was on Sunday, the 22nd of June, when

a preacher, Doctor Shaw, attracted the mob to the cross at St. Paul's, by loudly asserting that King Edward V. and his brother, the Duke of York, were not the legitimate children of Edward IV., who had already been married when he espoused their mother. "Much more," he added, "who knows even whether King Edward IV. was the son of the Duke of York? All those who have known the illustrious Duke Richard, assert that the Earl of March bore no resemblance to him; on the contrary, see!" he cried, as the Duke of Gloucester appeared at a balcony near the pulpit, "judge yourselves whether the noble Protector is not feature for feature the image of the hero whom we mourn." The mob listened aghast; acclamations and a popular proclamation of King Richard had been hoped for; but the people preserved silence, the Protector knitted his eyebrows, the preacher precipitately ended his sermon and disappeared in the serried ranks of auditors. It is asserted that he died of grief in consequence of his check.

The ice was broken, however, and on the second day afterwards the cause was entrusted to a more illustrious advocate: the Duke of Buckingham presented himself at Guildhall, and, repeating to the citizens the arguments which the preacher had expounded before the populace, he asserted that the Duke Richard was the only legitimate descendant of the Duke of York, and that the noblemen, like the commons of the North, had vowed never to obey a bastard. The citizens still hesitated, no voice was raised from the crowd; the duke insisted upon having a reply; the poor people who thronged at the door threw their caps in the air, crying, "Long live King Richard!" On the morrow, the Duke of Buckingham had succeeded in gaining over a certain number of citizens, and he was accompanied both by the peers and the Lords of the Council when he presented himself at the Protector's. The latter at first affected to refuse the audience: resistance was made, and the Duke of Buckingham, in the name of the Lords spiritual and temporal, as well as the Commons of England, implored Richard, duke of Gloucester, Protector and defender of the kingdom, to relieve England from the

misfortune of being governed by a bastard, by accepting the crown himself. The Protector hesitated, speaking of his affection for his nephews. "If you refuse," cried Buckingham, "the people of England will know well where to find a king who will accept without causing himself to be entreated." Richard no longer persisted: "It was his duty," he said, "to submit to the will of the nation, and, since it was required, he accepted the royal State of the two noble kingdoms of England and France, the one to govern and direct it from this day, the other to conquer and regain it as soon as it should be possible." King Edward V. was dethroned before having reigned, and King Richard III. ascended the throne.

None protested, none objected in favour of the poor children confined in the Tower. The preparations begun for the coronation of the nephew served for the coronation of the uncle; Richard was crowned at Westminster on the 6th of June, with his wife Anne, daughter of Warwick: Lord Howard was made Duke of Norfolk, the Archbishop of York was set at liberty, Lord Stanley was received into favour. The new king travelled from county to county, administering justice, listening to the complaints of his subjects, and repeated at York the coronation ceremony. Everywhere he was received with favour, and the disaffected did not show themselves.

In London, however, an agitation began to be stirred up in favour of the young princes; secret meetings had taken place, the health of the two children had been drunk, their partisans became reconciled with their mother; the Duke of Buckingham himself, who had placed the crown upon the head of the usurper, and who had been richly rewarded for it, had doubtless conceived some misgivings as to the ulterior intentions of Richard towards him; for he suddenly altered his course and placed himself at the head of the confederates, who were working to create in the south of England a party for the restoration of Edward V. Appearances were favourable; already Queen Elizabeth raised her head, when suddenly the porches of the Abbey were found closed; it was forbidden to allow any one to enter or leave, and

the unhappy mother learned at the same time that her cruel brother-in-law was informed of the conspiracy, and that he had baffled the object of it beforehand; the two princes no longer existed.

Assassinations almost always remain enveloped in mystery: it is related that scarcely had Richard quitted London when he was already endeavouring to cause Sir Robert Brackenbury, the guardian of the Tower, to be corrupted. Finding him inflexible, he had simply deposed him for twenty-four hours, consigning his office into the hands of his master of the horse, Sir John Tyrrell. The latter had, it was said, entered the Tower in the evening, accompanied by two robbers, and during the night they had stifled under their pillows the young princes, lying in the same bed. Then they had been interred noiselessly at the foot of the staircase, and the murderers had gone back to King Richard to receive their reward.

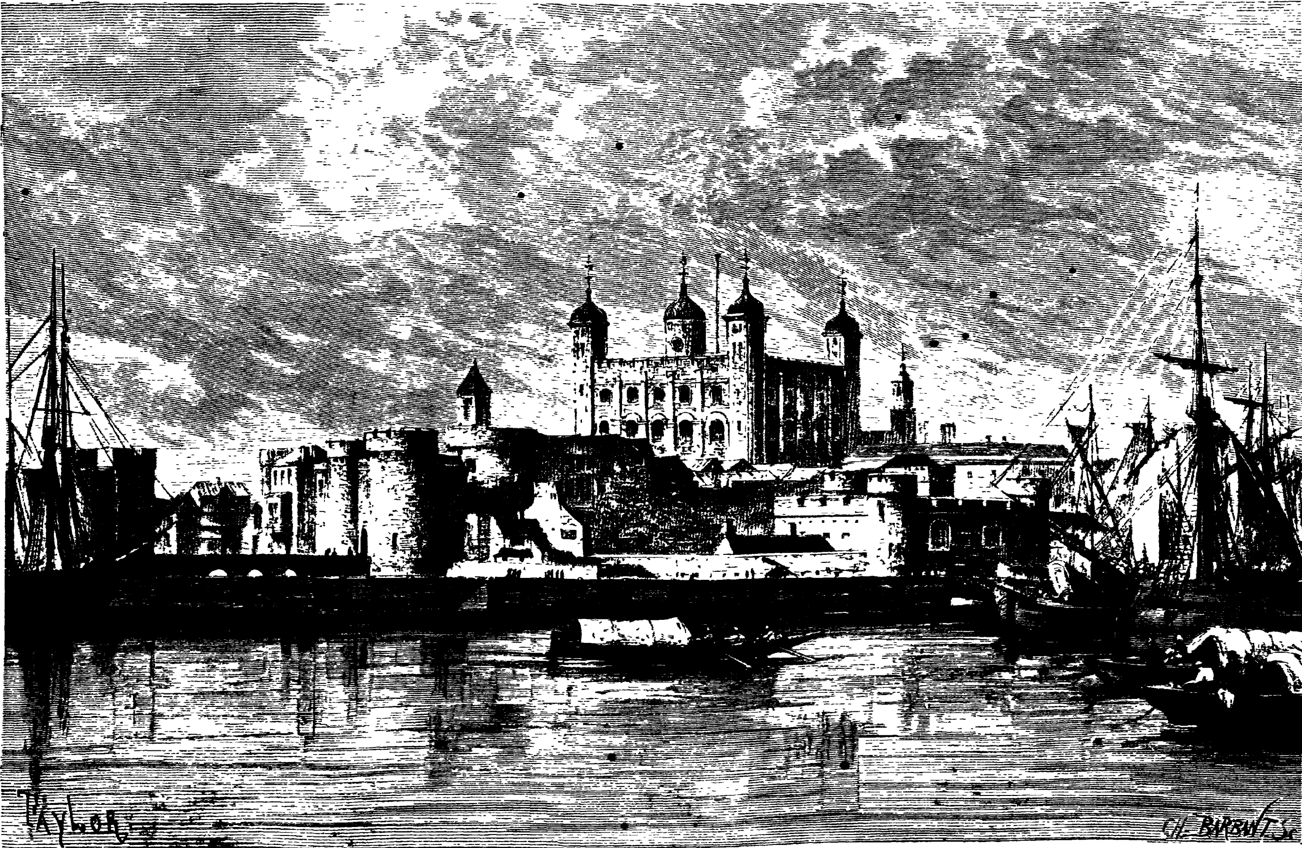
Great were the consternation and horror among the conspirators, but they had gone too far forward to recede; they could expect no mercy. A pretender was sought for: the Bishop of Ely proposed Henry, Earl of Richmond, grandson of Owen Tudor and Catherine of France, representing the House of Lancaster by the right of his mother, Margaret Beaufort, great granddaughter of John of Gaunt. He lived in Brittany, exiled like all his race. He could, it was said, be made to wed Lady Elizabeth of York, eldest sister of the unhappy Edward V., and thus unite the pretensions of the two royal Houses, the struggle between which had cost so much blood to England. The project was immediately adopted; the Countess of Richmond, the mother of the new pretender, had been married, for the second time, to Lord Stanley, the secret enemy of Richard III. He entered with ardour into the conspiracy, which extended every day; but the secret was so well kept that the reply of the Earl of Richmond had arrived in England, and he was preparing to depart from Saint Malo before King Richard had learnt the new danger which threatened him. At the first disclosure, he convoked his army at Leicester; but he had not joined his troops when already

the insurrection had taken place: the Marquis of Dorset had proclaimed Henry VII. at Exeter, the Bishop of Salisbury had declared himself in his favour in Wiltshire, the gentlemen of Kent and Berkshire had taken up arms, and the Duke of Buckingham displayed his banner at Brecknock.

The time was not yet ripe for the insurrection; the Earl of Richmond had been for a long time tossed about by contrary winds, and his forces were so insufficient when he approached the coast of Devonshire, that he did not dare to risk a disembarkation. The Duke of Buckingham had found the rivers swollen in Wales: having arrived at the Severn, he had been compelled to retrace his steps; his soldiers had disbanded without striking a blow; the duke had disguised himself, endeavouring to fly; he then concealed himself in the hut of a peasant, who betrayed him. King Richard arrived at Salisbury as his former friend was being brought there; he refused to see him, and immediately caused him to be beheaded. The other insurgents had taken refuge upon the Continent; those who were captured paid with their lives for their attempt; King Richard was everywhere triumphant, without having drawn his sword from its scabbard.

For the first time, Richard had convoked a Parliament; he wished to have his usurpation and vengeance ratified. Trembling before him, the Peers and Commons of England declared that King Richard III. was the sole legitimate possessor of the throne, which belonged to his descendants for ever, beginning with his son Edward, Prince of Wales. At the same time, and to punish the enemies of the new sovereign, the Parliament voted a bill of attainder, which deprived of their property and dignities all those who had been compromised in the last conspiracy; the Countess of Richmond alone obtained mercy through the intercession of her husband, Lord Stanley, skilful in remaining on good terms with the two parties, and who had succeeded in deceiving the perfidious and suspicious Richard.

Meanwhile the exiles had assembled in Brittany, where they enjoyed the favour of the Duke Francis and the support of his



THE TOWER OF LONDON.

minister, Pierre Landais. At the rejoicings of Christmas, 1483, Henry of Richmond assembled around him his partisans, solemnly swore to wed Elizabeth of York as soon as he should have triumphed over the usurper, and received the homage of all present. But King Richard had not renounced his vengeance: Landais was gained over, and the protection of the Duke Francis failing the exiles, they were about to be delivered up to their cruel enemy, when, warned in time, they proceeded into France and found a refuge and assistance beside King Charles VIII.

At the same time that Richard was pursuing with his hatred Henry of Richmond, he was labouring in England to deprive him of the support which alone could raise him to the throne. The Yorkists could not ally themselves with the Lancastrian prince, except in consideration of his marriage with Elizabeth of York; Richard resolved to sever from his alliance the queen and her daughter; he entered into correspondence with Elizabeth Woodville; she was weary of her voluntary prison, ambitious and frivolous; she forgot all, the usurpation, the murder of her sons, of her brother, of her most faithful friends, and, after having obtained from the king a solemn oath to treat her as well as her daughters, as good relatives, the queen quitted her retreat and appeared at the court, where the Princess Elizabeth was loaded with honours. Her marriage with the Prince of Wales was already spoken of, although the latter was scarcely eleven years of age and the Princess Elizabeth was at least eighteen, when the child died suddenly at Middleham Castle. For a moment, Richard appeared to stagger under the blow, but he soon rose again; he had formed a new project. Queen Anne was ill, and at all the festivals the Princess Elizabeth appeared, wearing in advance the royal robes. "When will she come to an end, then?" said Elizabeth; "she is a long time dying!" The Dowager Queen had written to her friends to abandon the Earl of Richmond, saying that she had found a better arrangement for the family. Anne died at length, but the confidants of King Richard did not approve of his project: he was accused,

they said, of having poisoned his wife. The people of the northern counties maintained their fidelity to the house of Warwick; the people considered this marriage with the daughter of his brother as incestuous; Richard fell back before these objections; he felt his throne insecure. King Charles VIII. had furnished the Earl of Richmond with men and money, and he had recently embarked at Harfleur; the King of England was raising an army to defend himself; at the same time he lavished proclamations against "one Henry Tudor by name, of illegitimate descent from the side of his father as well as his mother, having no right to the crown of England, pledged to the King of France, to abandon to him for ever Normandy, Guienne, Anjou, Maine, and even Calais, and coming to England followed by an army of strangers, to whom he had promised the earldoms and bishoprics, the baronies and the fiefs of knights." He therefore summoned all his good subjects to the defence of the country like loyal Englishmen, by providing him with soldiers and money, and he promised to spare neither his property nor his person to protect them against the common enemy.

The last remains of the popularity of Richard, in London, had disappeared before the forced loans which he had been obliged to make, and which the citizens called "malevolences." The royal banner had been raised at Nottingham and a considerable army had rallied around the king; but the coasts were ill-defended, and among the noblemen who had not replied to the appeal was Lord Stanley, ill, it was said, and detained in his bed. The king took possession of his son, Lord Strange, in the shape of a hostage and continued his march towards his rival, whose forces were not as yet very considerable. "There will not be one man in ten who will fight for Richard," asserted the Earl of Richmond, and he advanced resolutely as far as Atherston.

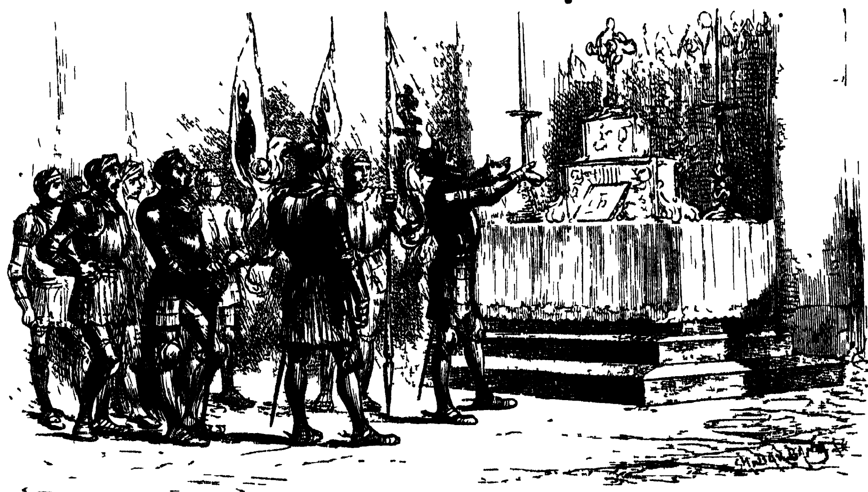
It is in the nature of tyrants and traitors to live in fear of treason. The House of York, so often stained with innocent blood, had never lacked courage. Richard III. had often exhibited the most brilliant valour. He was destined to give further proof of this on the morrow. It is, however, the incom-

parable genius of Shakspeare which has assembled so many terrible visions around the pillow of Richard III. during the night before the battle, and which has caused all the victims of his perfidy to pass before him, like so many sinister heralds, announcing his doom. When daylight dawned the king already felt himself condemned and conquered.

On the 22nd of August, the two adversaries met in the plain of Bosworth: the invading army was small; King Richard surveyed it with disdain while proceeding along his lines on horseback; the golden crown glittered upon his helmet. The combat began, "bitter and harsh," says a chronicler, "and harsher would it have been if the party of the king had remained staunch to him; but some joined the enemies, and the others awaited to see to which side victory would turn." By degrees, the banners which just before waved in the camp of Richard, floated beside the Earl of Richmond; gaps were being made in the royal ranks; Lord Stanley had just arrived with three thousand men, and was fighting for his son-in-law. King Richard transported himself from group to group, now in the centre, then at the wings, encouraging, directing, urging the soldiers; the Duke of Norfolk and his men alone remained resolutely faithful to him; at length the king saw himself ruined. "A horse," Shakspeare makes him exclaim, "my kingdom for a horse!" He dug his spurs into the flanks of his courser. "Treason!" he cried, and he sprang into the midst of his enemies. He opened up a passage for himself to confront Richmond, striking down to right and left those who resisted him; already he had overthrown the standard-bearer and had struck his rival, when the crowd of knights closed in around him; he fell, pierced with a hundred wounds. Lord Stanley picked up the crown smashed by the battle-axes and stained with the royal blood; and he placed it upon the head of his son-in-law. "Long live King Henry VII.!" cried he. "Long live King Henry VII.!" responded the army, and the cry was repeated in the ranks of the enemy. The faithful partisans of Richard had succumbed like himself. The dead king was deprived of his arms, and he was brought back to Leicester,

behind a herald; he was exposed for three days in the church, in order that the people might assure themselves of the death of the last prince of the House of York. When he was interred in the monastery of the Grey Friars, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, was king under the name of Henry VII. The wars of the Two Roses had ended and the era of the great reigns was about to begin for England.





CHAPTER XV.

THE TUDORS.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGULAR GOVERNMENT. HENRY VII. (1485–1509).

THE new sovereign of England was destined to render important services to her; he was not, however, a great man. Amidst the general disorder, in view of the growing desire for order and peace, he was enabled to display, and did in fact display a prudence and moderation which caused him to avoid the great faults, and preserved him from the terrible reverses which had attended his predecessors; but his character and his acts rarely excite our admiration and respect. His first care, on the morrow of the victory which had placed him upon the throne, was to transfer from the castle of Sheriffe-Sutton to the Tower of London, Edward Plantagenet, earl of Warwick, son of the unhappy Duke of Clarence, a child of fifteen years, who had grown up in prison since the death of his father, and who was destined there to pass the remainder of his life. He had had since a short time previously, as a com-

panion in his captivity, Princess Elizabeth, confined at Sheriffe-Sutton, by her uncle, King Richard III., when he had been compelled to relinquish his scheme of marrying her. The Earl of Warwick was sent to the Tower, an abode fatal to the princes of his race. Lady Elizabeth was, on the contrary, loaded with honours and brought back, with a numerous retinue, to her mother, Queen Elizabeth Woodville, already willing to hail the new sovereign for and against whom she had plotted, and who at length promised her the satisfaction of her ambition.

These precautions being taken, Henry VII. made his entry into London, on the 27th of August, 1485, with much pomp, and laid upon the high altar of St. Paul's church the three standards under which he had marched to victory, the image of St. George, the Red Dragon, and, it is not known why, a brown Cow. The people made merry in the streets, but already among the poor a distemper manifested itself, which soon spread into all classes of society, and made great ravages. It was a species of sweating disease, which does not appear to have been known hitherto, and the attacks of which were, it is said, almost always mortal. It was necessary to wait for the amelioration of the public health to proceed to the coronation of the new king. On the occasion of the ceremony, which took place on the 30th of October, by the hands of the Cardinal-Archbishop Bourchier, the same who, two years before, had proclaimed Richard III., the new sovereign raised his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, to the rank of Duke of Bedford; his father-in-law, Lord Stanley, was created Earl of Derby, and Sir Edward Courtenay became Earl of Devonshire. The king at the same time took care to surround his person with a guard of robust archers; this innovation astonished and discontented the people, but Henry VII., nevertheless, kept his guard; he knew by experience the small value of moral guarantees in a time of disorder and corruption.

The Parliament assembled at Westminster, on the 7th of November. The accession of King Henry VII. to the throne

was due to the discontent of the nation under the sanguinary yoke of Richard III. and to the hopes which were founded upon the projected union between the two rival Houses of York and Lancaster. Henry himself attributed it to his valour upon the battle-field of Bosworth, from which he always dated the commencement of his reign; but the national weariness and the royal conquest were not sufficiently secure bases upon which to solidly found a throne, and in the speech of Henry VII. to the Commons reassembled, he urged his hereditary rights at the same time as the favour of the Most High, who had given the victory to his sword. This last clause excited some uneasiness among the great noblemen who held all their titles and property from the fallen monarch. Henry hastened to reassure them, declaring that each should retain "his estates and inheritances, with the exception of the persons whom the present Parliament should think proper to punish for their offences." Scrupulous persons for a moment experienced an agitation when they perceived that the majority of the members of the House of Commons had formerly been outlawed by the Kings Edward IV. and Richard III.; the very sovereign who had convoked the Parliament, found himself in the same position. Had the Houses the right to sit? The judges were consulted, and declared that the crown removes all disqualifications, and that the king, in ascending the throne, was, by that fact alone, relieved of all the sentences passed upon him; the members of the House of Commons being outlawed, were obliged to wait, in order to sit in the Parliament, until a law should revoke their condemnation; the act was immediately voted, and the Lancastrians, excluded by the policy of the sovereigns of the House of York, re-entered the Parliament; all were weary of the struggle and the great noblemen easily obtained special ordinances which re-established them in all their rights and honours.

Such was not, however, the will of the king in all respects; he was not bloodthirsty, and did not seek to avenge himself by the execution of his enemies, but he was greedy, he wanted money, and confiscations were an easy means of enriching himself without

oppressing or exasperating the people. Henry VII. therefore presented to the Parliament a law which antedated by a single day his accession to the throne, by fixing it at the 21st of August, the eve of the battle of Bosworth; the new sovereign, who then in reality was but the Earl of Richmond, finding himself thus in a position to accuse of high treason all those who had fought against him, beginning with Richard III., whom he called the Duke of Gloucester, and of whom he enumerated with good reason all the tyrannies and crimes. Richard was dead, as well as the greater number of the partisans who had remained faithful to him; others had exiled themselves; but if the Duke of Norfolk had fallen at Bosworth, if Lord Lovel had taken refuge in a church, their visible property, the riches accumulated in their castles, had not disappeared with them, and the act meekly voted by the Parliament, permitted the king to seize upon the lands and treasures. He was not sparing of them; no sanguinary vengeance sullied the beginning of the new reign; Henry VII. contented himself with filling his coffers.

It was still to the Parliament, discredited as it was by the servility with which it had for so many years manifested towards the rival sovereigns who had succeeded each other upon the throne, that belonged the right of constituting the new dynasty. The provident wisdom of King Henry VII. did not seek in this solemn act to lean upon long genealogies, nor upon the Divine favour manifested by the victory; he contented himself with causing the revocation of all the acts passed in the Yorkist Parliaments against the House of Lancaster, avoiding with care any allusion to the Princess Elizabeth and her family; he simply relieved her of the stain of illegitimacy, which Richard III. had inflicted upon her to justify his usurpation; the Parliament contented itself with declaring that the inheritance and succession to the crown "should be, remain, and rest for ever the portion of the royal person of the sovereign Lord, King Henry VII., and of his legitimate descendants, for ever, by the grace of God." The rights of the House of York to the throne were passed over in silence, mention was not made of the projected union with the Princess

Elizabeth; Henry VII. was unwilling that it should be said that he owed the crown to a woman.

The nation, however, had not forgotten its past misfortunes; it hoped to enjoy a little peace only through the alliance of the two rival houses, and the delay of the king in celebrating his marriage, the affectation which he made of not speaking of it, caused uneasiness, not only to his Yorkist enemies, but to the whole people. When the Commons came and solemnly offered to the king the duties upon ships and upon woollens, now conceded for life, they accompanied their liberality by a peremptory request, asking him to take for his wife and spouse the Princess Elizabeth, "which marriage," it was added, "the Lord would deign to bless with a posterity of the race of kings." The Lords spiritual and temporal supported the petition of the Commons. Henry VII. understood that he had delayed enough, and on the 18th of January, 1486, the two Roses were at length united upon the same stem; the hatreds and rivalries, which had cost so much blood to England, were definitively appeased by the marriage of King Henry VII., the descendant of the House of Lancaster through his ancestor, John of Gaunt, and the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King Edward IV., the direct heiress of the rights and pretensions of the House of York. All the gifts accorded by the sovereigns who had succeeded each other upon the throne of England since the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Henry VI., the period at which the war had begun to assume the character of a revolt, were revoked by the Parliament; an amnesty act was proclaimed for all those who were willing to submit to the royal mercy and take the oath of allegiance; the king reinstated in his property and honours the son of the Duke of Buckingham, the last victim of the cruelty of Richard III.; he loaded with favours the friends who had helped him to ascend the throne, Chandos, Sir Giles Dunbury, Sir Robert Willoughby, the Marquis of Dorset, Sir John Bourchier; he caused his authority to be confirmed by a bull of Pope Innocent III., which proclaimed all the hereditary rights of the new sovereign, wisely

omitted from the English Act of Parliament, granted to Henry VII. the necessary dispensation for his marriage with the Princess Elizabeth, of whom he was a relative, then confirmed the elevation of the king to the throne, freely interpreting the Act of Parliament, and declaring that in the event that the queen should happen to die without children, or after having lost them, the crown should belong by right to the posterity of Henry VII. by a second marriage. All precautions being wisely taken, and his authority solidly established, the king pronounced the dissolution of his Parliament, and began a royal progress through the northern counties, in order to secure the good will of that portion of the kingdom still attached to the House of York.

The customary prudence of the king had failed him on one point. Jealous of the supreme power, he had kept in the shade the princess whom he had been compelled to wed, and had not taken her with him upon his journey through his kingdom; discontent was everywhere manifested upon this point in the north, but the pregnancy of the queen served as an excuse for her absence; the royal progress did not proceed, besides, without disquieting incidents. On the 17th of April the king was at Pontefract, when he learnt that Lord Lovel had quitted the sanctuary at Colchester and cut off his passage with considerable forces. The nobility of the counties which Henry VII. had recently passed through had assembled around him; he advanced against the rebels; Lord Lovel fled, concealed himself, and soon repaired to Flanders; his friends Humphrey and Thomas Stafford, who had prepared an insurrection in Worcestershire, took refuge in Colesham Church, near Abington; they were dragged therefrom, and the elder, Humphrey, perished on the scaffold; the younger received his pardon; and the king, on the 26th of April, entered York, one of the rare spots in England where the memory of King Richard III. was affectionately preserved.

We have said that Henry VII. was greedy; but he could contrive, when necessary, to relax his greed; he lavished gifts

and honours, reduced the fines of the City of York, caused festivals to be celebrated, and thus conquered the favour of the people, who cried in the streets, "God save King Henry! God preserve that handsome and sweet countenance!" When he resumed his march towards the south-east, Henry VII. continued, from town to town, the practice which he had established at York. He attended regularly at divine service; but after mass, every Sunday and holiday, one of the bishops who accompanied him read and expounded to the faithful the papal bull, threatening with eternal punishment all the enemies of the monarch, whose rights to the throne were therein so carefully developed. The king had arrived in London, in the month of June, when he received an embassy from James IV., King of Scotland, with whom he concluded a treaty of alliance, promising to cement it later on by a union between the two families; peace and mutual good feeling were equally important to the two kings, surrounded by enemies, whom they dreaded to see take refuge in the neighbouring kingdom. The little prince, whose hand Henry VII. had already promised, was born on the 20th of September, at Winchester, and was named Arthur, in memory of the hero of the old romances of King Arthur of the Round Table, whose death tradition still denied.

Usurpations engender conspiracies; no reign was to be more constantly agitated by them than that of Henry VII.; he had occupied the throne for fifteen months only, when, in the month of November, 1486, a priest and a youth of most charming countenance disembarked at Dublin. The priest announced that his young companion was no other than Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, escaped by a miracle from the Tower of London. By degrees, partisans gathered around the young man; he was handsome, intellectual, his manners were noble, he had been carefully instructed in his part, and did not experience much difficulty in deceiving minds prejudiced by an hereditary attachment to the father and grandfather of the Earl of Warwick, who had both contrived to render themselves popular in their government of Ireland. Edward Plantagenet had even

been born in that country, and thus possessed fresh rights to the attachment of the nation. The great noblemen, who might have shown themselves to be more clearsighted, were, in general, little in favour of the state of affairs recently established in England, and the Earl of Kildare, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, received the sham Warwick with open arms, presenting him to all his friends as the legitimate heir to the throne in the character of the only male descendant of Richard of York; on all sides the pretender was saluted with the title of king; messengers had already borne the news to Flanders, where the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV., held her court, and received into her good graces all the enemies of the new King of England, when the latter learnt, in London, the danger that threatened him. He immediately convoked his Council; the discontent was general, the amnesty had been ill-observed, a mass of restrictions had hindered the application of it, and the real Earl of Warwick was not the only inhabitant of the prison of the Tower. The first care of the prudent king was to proclaim a fresh amnesty, more complete and earnest than the first, and, at the same time, to produce in public, in all parts of London, the real Edward Plantagenet, earl of Warwick, who had not for a single instant left his prison. The third measure of the king appeared at variance with the clemency manifested by the amnesty; the Dowager Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, was arrested under the frivolous pretext that she had formerly broken faith with the Earl of Richmond, now King of England, because, after having promised him her daughter in marriage, she had consigned her into the hands of the usurper Richard III., who wished to marry her. The real motive of the disfavour which suddenly attacked the intriguing widow of Edward IV. has never been known; it has been supposed that she had been compromised in the conspiracy which had caused a new pretender to the throne to spring up in Ireland; it has been said that she alone could have instructed the young man or his tutor in the private details which he related about the royal family; but these assertions remain at least doubtful;

what is certain is the confiscation of the property of Elizabeth Woodville and her imprisonment in a convent near Bermondsey.

Meanwhile the young pretender to the throne had received an unexpected support. The Earl of Lincoln, son of John de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, and of Elizabeth, sister of the kings Edward IV. and Richard III., formerly designated by his uncle Richard to succeed him upon the throne, had quitted England and repaired to the residence of his aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy. She had furnished him with money and troops, and Lincoln had embarked for Ireland with Lord Lovel. He could not be deceived about the imposture; he knew the Earl of Warwick, but it suited his views to adopt the cause of the pretender, and he caused him to be crowned in Dublin Cathedral. The golden crown from a statue of the Virgin was borrowed to represent the royal diadem, and the young man, being proclaimed under the name of Edward VI., was carried in triumph upon the shoulders of his new subjects, while King Henry VII. was raising troops and quietly riding about in his kingdom, selecting by preference for his visits the counties where the influence of the Earl of Lincoln was especially exercised.

The queen and the little prince were already established in the fortress of Kenilworth, when the pretender and his partisans landed at Fouldrey, at the southern extremity of Furness. A few friends of Lincoln and Lovel came and joined him, but the population did not rise in their favour, and the hopes of the rebels were growing faint, when, on the 16th of June, 1487, they encountered the advanced guard of the king at Stoke; the Earl of Oxford, who commanded it, carried off a brilliant victory, notwithstanding the desperate courage of the assailants. His Majesty Edward VI., or, simply, Lambert Simnel, the son of an humble baker, was made a prisoner, with his tutor, the priest Simon; but the noblemen who had embraced his cause nearly all died upon the field of battle, the Earl of Lincoln at their head. Lord Lovel alone disappeared; but this time he concealed himself so well that, two hundred years later, the skeleton of a man was discovered in a vault in his castle of Minster-Lovel,

in Oxfordshire: it is supposed that the unhappy master of the house had taken refuge therein and had there perished by some accident.

Very few executions followed the revolt and the victory, but the harvest of confiscations was abundant; the priest Simon was imprisoned, and none heard speak of him any more, "the king being fond of concealing his own dangers," says a chronicler, "Lambert Simnel was placed in the royal kitchens, ignominiously turning the spit, after having worn a crown;" he became eventually one of the falconers of the king. Henry VII. had recently made a pilgrimage to deposit his victorious banner upon the altar of Our Lady of Walsingham.

The king had too much sense and sagacity to refuse to understand the symptoms of discontent which had manifested themselves by this revolt; he knew that he had incensed the Yorkists by the jealous obscurity in which he kept the queen, and he resolved to grant her the honour of coronation, which had hitherto in vain been claimed for her; on the 20th of November, Elizabeth of York was solemnly crowned at Westminster, while her husband, hidden behind a carved screen, contemplated the ceremony at which he had not been willing to be present.

For more than two years past, King Henry VII. had concentrated all his efforts upon the internal pacification of his kingdom, without making himself uneasy about the troubles of the Continent; but scarcely had he gained the victory of Stoke, when he saw an embassy arrive in England from the King of France, Charles VIII. While Henry VII. had been repulsing the pretensions to the throne of an impostor supported by rebels, his old protector, the King of France, had attacked a still older friend of his, the Duke Francis of Brittany, who had given shelter to the Duke of Orleans, subsequently Louis XII., accused of having conspired against his cousin. A French army had entered Brittany, summoned by a certain number of Breton noblemen dissatisfied with the influence which the Duke of Orleans had assumed over their duke, and it had reaped important advantages, when the ambassadors of Charles VIII., fearing an

English intervention in favour of the Duke of Brittany, came to expound to the wise Henry VII. the legitimacy of a war which they qualified as defensive. None made allusion to the probable annexation of the duchy of Brittany to France, either by conquest or by the marriage of the young king with the heiress of the Duke Francis; Henry VII. asked no indiscreet questions, and when the Bretons appeared, in their turn, at his court, begging assistance in men and money, the King of England piously offered his mediation "in order to acquit himself before God and men of all his duties of gratitude towards the king and the duke, for whom he was even disposed to go upon a pilgrimage." The French asked for nothing more, their army pursued the course of its victories, but the coming and going of the English negotiators from London to Paris and from Paris to Rennes, did not satisfy the Bretons, who saw themselves closely pressed. Sir Edward Woodville, one of the uncles of the queen, attempted, at his risk and peril, a little expedition in favour of the Duke Francis; but King Henry forbade any demonstration of this kind. His envoys who were then in Paris, had run great dangers, it was said, at the news of the succour sent to the Bretons by the English.

The cause of Brittany was popular in England, and decided though he was not to wage war, the king took advantage of this feeling to cause the Parliament to vote considerable subsidies; at the same time he secretly warned the court of France that he should perhaps be compelled to send reinforcements to the Bretons. The warning was profited by to push affairs on with vigour; all the factions of Bretons had now united against the common enemy; the forces of the duke were supported by the troops sent by the King of the Romans, Maximilian, and by the Count d'Albret, as well as the Englishmen of Sir Edward Woodville. The Duke Francis and his allies were defeated, however, on the 20th of July, 1488, by the Sire de la Trémoille, commander of the French army, at Saint Aubin-du-Cormier; the Duke of Orleans was made a prisoner, and the English were cut to pieces; before the public voice had been raised in England to

demand vengeance, the French had taken Dinan and Saint Malo, and were threatening the Duke of Brittany as far as in Rennes; the unhappy prince had no other resource than to sign a treaty by which he undertook to summon no assistance from abroad, and never to marry his daughters without the consent of France. One month after having suffered this humiliation, he died broken-hearted, and the little Duchess Anne, a child twelve years of age, remained alone with her council of regency in the presence of her enemies.

The King of France claimed the guardianship of the unhappy princess, and her barons had not yet had time to reply to this pretension, which was equivalent to the surrender of the duchy, when the French army again entered Brittany and took possession of several towns. This time all the prudence of Henry VII. could not suffice to repress the indignation of his people at the aspect of this unequal war; the growth of the power of France also made him uneasy, perhaps, in his policy; the King of England formed an alliance with the great sovereigns of Europe to arrest the conquests of Charles VIII. Maximilian, King of the Romans, who claimed the hand of the little Duchess Anne, and his son the Archduke Philip, the King of Spain, and the King of Portugal undertook to enter France to turn aside the forces furious for the ruin of Brittany. Henry VII. demanded fresh subsidies of his Parliament to continue the war.

Well supplied with money, notwithstanding the reduction which the Commons had imposed upon his requests, the holder of two ports upon the coast of Brittany, Henry VII. at length sent to the assistance of the duchess six thousand archers in the spring of 1489; at the same time, a Spanish army was crossing the defile of Roncevaux, which allowed the English, under the orders of Lord Willoughby de Broke, to hold in check the French troops remaining in Brittany; another English corps seconded the attempts of the King of the Romans upon the north, and distinguished itself at the capture of Saint Omer; a treaty of peace was concluded at the end of the year without much glory for either party. The rigour which the officers of the King of

England had given proof in exacting the subsidies had excited an insurrection in the northern counties, and notwithstanding the prompt repression of the disturbances, the new taxes produced only the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling, instead of seventy-five thousand pounds voted by the Parliament; Henry VII. took advantage of it to claim, of the Duchess of Brittany, the reimbursement of all the expenditure which he had incurred to help her.

While preparations were being made for renewing the hostilities, and the Parliament was voting a tax of the tenth and the fifteenth denier to support the war, one of the allies of King Henry, Maximilian, by negotiating secretly with the counsellors of the Duchess of Brittany, obtained the promise of her hand, and mysteriously married her at Rennes, through his ambassador, the Prince of Orange, in the month of April, 1491; he would have acted more wisely by proceeding himself to fetch the heiress of such large dominions, sought by so many suitors. Scarcely had the Sire d'Albret, a disappointed pretender, who had at one time attempted the abduction of the young princess, been assured of the object of the mission of the Prince of Orange, when he gave warning to the court of France of it, at the same time surrendering to the French the town of Nantes. In vain did the duchess, who took the title of Queen of the Romans, demand assistance of her new spouse; he was absorbed in a revolt of his Flemish subjects: Brittany again found itself alone, confronting the whole strength of France.

But the views of the court of France towards Brittany had changed. Charles VIII. was now of age, he had shaken off the yoke of his sister, the Dame de Beaujeu; he had released from his prison his cousin the Duke of Orleans, and he secretly laid claim to the hand of the Duchess Anne. Betrothed in infancy to the Princess Elizabeth of York, now Queen of England; afterwards designed by his father King Louis XI. to become the husband of Margaret of Austria, "Margot, the gentle damsel," daughter of Margaret of Burgundy, he had seen his little affianced bride, who was then eleven years of age, brought up

at his court, and he still publicly announced his intention of wedding her as soon as she should be of age to be married. He carried on negotiations, however, with the ladies and lords who surrounded Anne of Brittany, and when he thought himself assured of a sufficient party among them, he frankly declared his purpose, notwithstanding the engagements which united him to the Princess Margaret, as well as the more sacred bonds which bound the Duchess Anne to Maximilian, king of the Romans, the father of the affianced bride of Charles VIII. All these obstacles did not arrest the King of France, and his victorious arms were a powerful argument in his favour. Maximilian did not send assistance to his wife; the French threatened to besiege Rennes. The question lay, with Anne, between captivity and marriage: she concluded a treaty with Charles VIII., declared void the union which she had contracted with the King of the Romans, and definitively assured Brittany to the crown of France, by wedding, on the 6th of December, 1491, King Charles, in the castle of Langeais, in Touraine. The long struggles of England and France, upon Breton territory, were for ever ended.

The anger was great in England; perhaps Henry VII. had in fact been deceived: he proclaimed it very loudly, declaring that Charles VIII. disturbed the Christian world, and that in future he would no longer hesitate to march to the conquest of France, his legitimate and natural inheritance; at the same time he talked loudly of the alliances which he had concluded, and he obtained fresh subsidies from the Parliament, the usual result of the warlike protestations of Henry VII. The raising of troops proceeded rapidly; the names of Crecy, Agincourt, Poictiers, Verneuil were already in all mouths; the noblemen pawned their property, reserving only their horses and swords; they thought themselves certain of acquiring beautiful estates in France; an army of twenty-five thousand foot soldiers and sixteen hundred horses embarked in the month of October, 1492; it was a question of the conquest of the whole of France, an undertaking which could not fail to be long, and winter

quarters could be taken up at Calais. Siege was immediately laid to Boulogne, without any attempt at resistance from the French; all the plan of the campaign was known beforehand between the two monarchs, and peace had been concluded before the commencement of the war. Eight days only had been passed before the town, without the assault being given, when letters began to circulate in the camp destroying all hope of the co-operation of the King of Spain and the King of the Romans; Henry VII. thereupon assembled his council, and submitted for its deliberation the grave question of peace with France. All the favourites of the king had been bought over in advance with French gold, they solemnly decided for the conclusion of peace. The treaties, long since prepared, were signed at the beginning of November; by the public conditions the two kings undertook always to live in peace; mutual understanding was even to subsist for one year after the death of whichever of the sovereigns should survive the other; by the secret treaty, Charles VIII. bound himself to pay by degrees to the King of England, the sum of a hundred and forty-nine thousand pounds sterling, in discharge of all his claims upon the duchy of Brittany, and in payment of the tribute due to King Edward IV. It was thus that Henry VII. knew how to sell war to his subjects and peace to his enemies. Charles VIII. found himself at liberty to proceed to his undertakings against the kingdom of Naples, and the King of England could concentrate all his attention upon his internal affairs, which threatened to give him fresh and grave cares.

A second pretender had in fact arisen for the crown. This time, it was no longer a question, as with Lambert Simnel, of a living prince, easy to be confronted with the impostor; the new rival who had been raised up to King Henry VII. was nothing less, it was said, than the Duke of York, brother of the unhappy Edward V., escaped from the Tower by a miracle, wandering about the world for seven years past, and now determined to reclaim his crown. He had at first presented himself in Ireland, and had soon contrived to form a party there, notwithstanding

the recent remembrance of Lambert Simnel. But the Earl of Kildare still hesitated, and the young pretender turned his steps to France. Soldier and chivalrous as he was, Charles VIII. was not destitute of the cunning natural to the son of Louis XI. It was before the war with England, and he was well pleased to frighten Henry VII.: he received the adventurer, recognized his rights, and admitted him to his court. He was soon surrounded there by a guard of English exiles. While the treaties had remained unsigned at Etaples, Charles VIII. looked with favour upon the pretender; the peace with Henry VII. being once proclaimed, the self-styled Duke of York was compelled to quit the court of France and to take refuge beside the Duchess of Burgundy, the usual resource of the enemies of Henry VII. The latter had demanded that the pretender should be delivered up to him; but Charles VIII. refused this act of treachery, unworthy of his honour. Meanwhile, the Duchess of Burgundy, Margaret, hesitated, or pretended to hesitate to recognize her nephew. She interrogated him, and caused him to undergo a minute examination upon the secrets of the family. Finally, she solemnly proclaimed that he was really the Duke of York, son of her brother King Edward IV., the White Rose of England; she gave him at her court the state of a prince, furnished him with a guard, and wrote everywhere to her friends in England and on the Continent to announce the miracle which had restored her nephew to her. The English malcontents, and they were numerous, joyfully embraced this new hope. A delegate was secretly despatched to the court of the Duchess Margaret, to verify the pretensions of the prince; he came back as convinced as the duchess herself. It was really, he said, the Duke of York, the legitimate heir to the crown of England, the amiable and intellectual child whose loss had been mourned. The conspiracy began to spread and to be organized.

King Henry meanwhile had not remained inactive; he also had sent secret emissaries to Ireland, who asserted that the pretended Duke of York was no other than Perkin Warbeck, the son of a merchant of Tournay, a converted Jew; that he

had much frequented the society of English merchants in Flanders, then had travelled in Europe in the suite of Lady Brompton, wife of an exile. Upon the faith of these instructions Henry demanded of the Archduke Philip, son of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, to deliver up or, at least, to drive from his states this audacious impostor. Philip lavished assurances of his devotion, promised to refuse all support to the pretender; but the Duchess Margaret was sovereign in her states, and none could compel her to send Perkin Warbeck away. Henry VII. interdicted to his subjects all commerce with Flanders, and he had recourse to deceit to obtain that which diplomacy refused to him. Sir Robert Clifford, being bribed, gave up the names of the conspirators; they were all arrested: Sir Simon Montford, Sir Robert Ratcliffe and William Daubeney were immediately executed. Among those who received their pardon "few men survived long," says the chronicler; Lord Fitzwalter, amongst others, having attempted to escape from his prison at Calais, was beheaded without any more ado. One greater than he was shortly going to pay with his life for the same suspicions.

Sir William Stanley, brother of the Lord Stanley, now Earl of Derby, who had placed Henry VII. upon the throne, and who had himself saved the life of the king at Bosworth, was accused by Clifford of having been concerned in the conspiracy. The king refused at first to believe it; but when he interrogated his chamberlain, Sir William was embarrassed in his answers, and ended by confessing to a certain degree of complicity. The judges of Westminster held the crime to be sufficient: Stanley was condemned to death. All reckoned upon his pardon; the king's aversion to blood was remembered, as well as the services which the family of the guilty man had rendered him; but the large fortune of Sir William was forgotten; he was executed and all his property was confiscated. Terror began to seize the conspirators; they distrusted each other. The position of Warbeck became difficult in Flanders; the merchants complained of the cessation of the English commerce. The adven-

turer resolved to land unexpectedly in England, hoping that an insurrection would be made in his favour. He arrived near Deal on the 3rd of July, 1495, while the king had gone to pay a visit to his mother, in Lancashire. He was accompanied by about five hundred men, all English exiles and of desperate courage; but the population rose *against* the impostor, and not *for* him: the peasants of Kent fought with their sticks and pitchforks. The assailants were killed or made prisoners; a small number succeeded in reaching the vessels: Warbeck was at the head of these latter. The captives were all conducted to London, their hands tied together, like a flock of sheep, and were executed in a mass in the same manner. Henry VII. lavished praises and promises upon the brave countrymen who had repulsed the enemy; he, at the same time, concluded a treaty with the Flemings, promising to restore the freedom of commerce, if the Duke Philip would undertake to prevent the Duchess Margaret from receiving Warbeck and his partisans. The adventurer was therefore compelled to quit Flanders; he presented himself in Ireland, where he was coldly received; it was to Scotland that he went to seek refuge. The King of Scotland was discontented with Henry VII.; he willingly received the pretender.

Notwithstanding numerous treaties and projects of alliance so many times concluded between the courts of England and Scotland. Henry VII. had always been concerned in the conspiracies against James III. The brother of the King of Scotland, Albany, was dead; but the barons had not become more subdued; the malcontents had rallied around the young Duke of Rothsay, the eldest son of the monarch, and this unnatural war, after alternations of successes and reverses, had been terminated, on the 18th of June, 1488, by a sanguinary combat at Little Canglar, a wild heath at about one league from Stirling. The king had been carried off by his horse; he had fallen in a swoon. Some peasants had lifted him up without knowing him; but amidst the tumult a man had approached the unhappy prince, and, leaning towards him as

though to succour him, he had struck him two blows with a dagger. James III. was only thirty-five years of age, and his death excited in the heart of the son, who had fought and almost dethroned him, a remorse which ended only with his life. The example of revolt which he had set bore, moreover, its fruits; he had lived in the midst of conspiracies and internal struggles, finding at times in his embarrassments traces of the influence of Henry VII., more often being ignorant of his complicity, but convinced, notwithstanding, that the King of England was a perfidious ally with whom it was necessary to arrive at an open rupture. Perkin Warbeck furnished him with the opportunity for it. James did not look very closely into the truth of his story; he was duped, or feigned to be so, and, shortly after the arrival of his "good cousin of York" in Scotland, amidst tournaments and rejoicings which he lavished, the King of Scotland married the adventurer, Perkin Warbeck, to Lady Catherine Gordon, the charming daughter of the Earl of Huntley, and through her mother a near relative of the royal house.

So many favours caused uneasiness to the King of England, who kept spies amongst the great Scottish noblemen, and was thus informed exactly of the movements of Warbeck. The barons of Scotland were less favourable to him than the king, some because they had been gained over by Henry, others because they foresaw the disasters of a war undertaken in his favour. Meanwhile, the Duchess of Burgundy had caused men and money to arrive; the court of France, discontented at the obstacles which Henry VII. placed to the attempts of King Charles upon Italy, urged Warbeck to attempt an invasion into England. Henry had caused an offer to be made to the King of Scotland of a hundred thousand crowns of gold if he would deliver up the pretender to him. James IV. had rejected the proposal with indignation. "I have melted up my plate for him," he had said. "I will not betray him." Warbeck had recently published a document, skilfully conceived, in which he related his escape from the Tower and his wandering life, dwelt

upon the tyranny of Henry VII., upon the exactions with which he burdened his people, and summoned the English to rise and rally round him. The King of Scotland accompanied him, solely through friendship, he said, and would retire as soon as an English army should be on foot. It was with these declarations that Warbeck crossed the frontier and entered England at the commencement of the year 1497.

The northern counties did not trust to the disinterestedness of the Scotch, and nobody came to meet the pretender; all the cattle had been led away, the grain and fodder had been hidden, and when the Scottish troops began to pillage to compensate themselves for the cold reception which the population gave them, the self-styled Duke of York in vain sought to restrain them, saying that he would prefer to lose the throne rather than owe it to the sufferings of the English. The soldiers were dying of hunger and did not fail to take advantage of any excess. The peasants began to arm themselves: the army of invasion found itself compelled to recross the frontiers without having fought, without having even awaited the English army, as had been announced by the clever spy of Henry VII., Ramsay, Lord Bothwell, formerly a favourite of James.

The King of England meanwhile was suffering from the grave consequences of the war and the avidity which always led him to profit by it to oppress his subjects. He had obtained of the Parliament a gift of two-tenths and two-fifteenths: but the people were determined not to pay taxes so opressive. The insurrection commenced in Cornwall; the people demanded the head of Morton, archbishop of Canterbury, prime minister and friend of Henry VII., accused of having advised the new taxes. Sixteen thousand rebels entered Devonshire; they were soon joined by numerous adherents, at the head of whom marched Lord Audley and other noblemen. Each county which they traversed furnished reinforcements to them; they presented a formidable aspect when they arrived, on a fine day in June, at Blackheath, near London. The army of the King awaited them: the agita-



CONFESSION OF PERKIN WARBECK

tion was great in the city; but Lord Daubeney and the Earl of Oxford advanced against the rebels. Henry VII. had prudently remained in the rear with the reserve; he had commanded that Saturday should be awaited to give battle: it was his lucky day, he said. The 22nd of June, 1499, made no exception to the rule. The insurgents fought valiantly; but they had no cavalry nor artillery, nor experienced chiefs: a great slaughter was made of them, and many of their number were made prisoners, among others Lord Audley, a lawyer named Flammock, and Joseph, a blacksmith, who had greatly contributed to excite the revolt by the violence of his speeches against the king and the archbishop. They all three perished, but they perished alone; the mass of peasants were soon released. The king had caused the execution of all the desperate men captured at Deal in the following of Perkin Warbeck, because neither repentance nor gratitude could be expected of them; he amnestied the rebels of Cornwall, and thus re-established tranquillity in the insurrectionary province. Henry VII. was as wise as he was provident; he was neither vindictive nor sanguinary, and there was nothing to confiscate of the poor peasants. He had, however, flattered himself too much in reckoning upon the gratitude of the county of Cornwall. Perkin Warbeck had quitted Scotland in consequence of the treaty of peace concluded between James IV. and Henry VII. through the efforts of Don Pedro Ayala, the Spanish ambassador; the delicate cares and kindnesses of the Scottish monarch had followed him up to his embarkation. The Duke and Duchess of York, as they were still called, had put in, in the first instance, at Cork, in Ireland; but Warbeck in vain sought to urge the Irish to insurrection. He then conceived the project of disembarking in Cornwall, of which he had received favourable accounts; and on the 7th of September he landed at Whitsand Bay. His forces did not amount to a hundred and fifty men; but soon the relatives, the friends of the men killed at Blackheath came and joined him. Warbeck was at the head of an army, when he appeared, on the 17th of September, before the city of Exeter, having solemnly taken the title of King of

England and France, under the name of Richard IV. The queen had taken refuge, for greater security, in the fortress of St. Michael. Whether prince or impostor, the pretender had contrived to gain the heart of his wife: she was devoted to his fortunes, and she awaited with anxiety the result of the campaign. Exeter was defended by the Earl of Devonshire, supported by the gentlemen and citizens. The insurgents had neither artillery nor besieging machines; they sought in vain to burst open the portal, the cannons of the ramparts swept them down without resistance. The peasants of Devonshire were beginning to retreat in small detachments; but the men of Cornwall remained firm, and promised to die to the last man for the king whom they had chosen. An advance was made as far as Taunton. There it was necessary to confront the royal army. Warbeck reviewed his rustic troops, urging them to fight well on the morrow; but during the night he selected his fleetest horse and fled without warning any one. When the insurgents found themselves without a chief they did not try the fortune of arms, but placed themselves at the mercy of the king, who caused the leaders to be hanged, and sent back the others, half naked and dying of hunger. The best runners of the army were in pursuit of Warbeck; but he had forestalled them and took refuge in the church at Beaulieu, in the heart of the New Forest, before he could be reached. The king had caused men-at-arms to be despatched to arrest Lady Catherine Gordon, whose beauty and whose tears touched him: he confided her to the care of Queen Elizabeth, who treated her captive with much kindness.

The royal troops surrounded Beaulieu church; but Henry hesitated to violate the sanctuary; he employed about Warbeck skilful agents, who persuaded the adventurer to accept the pardon which they were commissioned to offer to him. The self-styled Duke of York therefore quitted his refuge, without having seen the king, who had privately contemplated him, being curious to examine the features of the audacious impostor. When Henry VII. re-entered London, Warbeck formed part of his retinue; he had not been ill-treated, but he had been made to pass slowly

through the principal streets of the city, in order to satisfy the curiosity of the people. He was conducted as far as the Tower, and the spectators thought to have seen him for the last time; but at the end of a few hours he reappeared, still accompanied by his guards, and took the road to Westminster. There he came to the court, apparently free, but closely watched. Far from being degraded into service, like Simnel, he was surrounded with considerations and certain honours. He was several times interrogated before the secret council, but his avowals remained a mystery, "so much so that men, disappointed at that which they heard, came to imagine it was not known what, and found themselves more perplexed than ever; but the king rather preferred to mystify the curious than to light the braziers."

The conduct of King Henry VII. remained an enigma to his contemporaries, and time has not divulged the secret of it. Perkin Warbeck had lived for eight months at the court, when he contrived to escape therefrom. Being immediately pursued, he took refuge in the priory of Sheen, near Richmond. The prior obtained his pardon of the king before consenting to deliver him up, but the honours which had been assigned to him had vanished: he was placed in the stocks before the gate of Westmin ter, a document in hand, compelled to read his confession to the people and to suffer their insults all day. This time the prisoner avowed his humble origin, and related his whole career, cursing the ambition which had caused his imposture. After the second reading, Warbeck was shut up in the Tower, where he became the companion of the unhappy Earl of Warwick.

One year had elapsed since the attempt of Warbeck and his public humiliation. A third pretender Ralph Wilford, had renewed the fraud of Simnel, and assumed the name of Warwick; he had been executed, and the Augustine monk who preached his cause, had been condemned to imprisonment for life. It was in the month of July, 1499, when a rumour was spread of a plot formed by Warbeck and the real Earl of Warwick to escape together from the Tower and foment a fresh insurrection. The

charm of the manners and mind of Warbeck must have been great, for he had not only seduced his companion in captivity, but he had contrived to win over all his jailors. The governor of the Tower was to be assassinated, and the freed prisoners intended to take refuge in a safe place, to proclaim King Richard IV., by summoning to their aid all the partisans of the Duke of Clarence, brother of Warwick. Such, at least, were the allegations in the indictment, for the execution of the plot had not even been begun when it was discovered. It was sufficient to explain the execution of Warbeck. He had long and cleverly played his part; but he did not retract his confessions at the supreme moment, and died courageously at Tyburn, on the 23rd of November, 1499. His last attempt cost the life of the unhappy Earl of Warwick; he was accused before the peers, not only with having sought to escape, but with having plotted with Warbeck to overthrow the king. The poor prince was twenty-nine years of age, but, having been a prisoner since the age of seven years, he was as ignorant of the world as a child; he confessed all the crimes with which he was accused, and having been condemned to lose his head, he was beheaded on Tower Hill on the 23rd of November. With him ended the numerous attempts against the crown of Henry VII; all the possible heirs to the throne, real or pretended, had disappeared, and political passions began to be appeased under government regular and firm, if it was at times greedy and despotic.

Relieved of any fears of internal wars, and more tranquil abroad, Henry VII. turned his views towards the settlement of his children; he had for a long time past resolved to marry his eldest daughter, Margaret, to the King of Scotland, in order to definitively attach that sovereign to him. At the beginning of the year 1500, he sent to King James one of the most clever among the ecclesiastical negotiators formed in his service, Fox, Bishop of Durham; and this skilful negotiator contrived to lead the young monarch into asking for the hand of the princess; the marriage was celebrated in London, in the month of January, 1502; but Margaret, who was then twelve

years of age, was not sent to Scotland until the end of 1505; during this interval, her elder brother, Prince Arthur, heir presumptive to the throne, had married the Princess Catherine of Aragon, daughter of the able Ferdinand and the great Isabella; but he had died almost immediately after his marriage, and King Henry mooted the question with Ferdinand and with the Pope, to know whether the princess of twenty-one years of age, and widow of the elder brother, could marry the younger brother, Henry, who was but thirteen years of age. The dispensation arrived and the betrothal was resolved upon, for King Ferdinand finding that matters dragged on at length, had claimed not only the princess, but the large sums paid for her dowry. Catherine lived at the court of her father-in-law, honoured and beloved by all, awaiting for five years the celebration of a marriage which was to terminate so sadly.

Amidst the negotiations of alliances for his children, Henry VII had also been occupied in marrying himself; the queen his wife had died shortly after having lost Prince Arthur, and the great preoccupation of the widowed monarch was to find a spouse rich enough to sensibly increase the treasures which he took so much pleasure in hoarding. His negotiations and hopes did not prevent him from continuing to oppress his subjects. Avaricious passions grow with age; Archbishop Morton, whom the people had so often cursed, had died in 1500, but the nation had gained nothing thereby; he had been replaced in his exactions by two "leeches, two shearers," as they were called, more bold and rapacious than Morton, less skilful than he in proving to the good English people that all was going on in a legal manner and that the province of the subjects in the State was limited to paying the taxes cheerfully. The two new agents, Empson and Dudley, were equally detested. Dudley was of good birth and knew how to set off the exactions in a suitable form; Empson, the son of a workman, triumphed coarsely over the unfortunate people whom he oppressed, and ridiculed their miseries. Both were lawyers, well versed in their profession; each offence, crime, or misdemeanor became in their hands a matter for a fine,

and to allow none to escape, they kept spies everywhere charged to warn them, and juries composed of wretches who decided all matters at their pleasure. "They hovered thus over all England," says the chronicler, "like tame falcons for their master and savage falcons for themselves, and they amassed great riches," while filling the royal coffers.

Notwithstanding these abuses the national prosperity went on increasing; the revival of order had sufficed to give scope to the commerce which was to found in England the middle class; the great aristocracy, decimated and ruined by the wars of the Roses, driven from power by the skilful conduct of Henry VII., remained shut up in the castles, and the younger members of the noblest houses began to devote themselves to agriculture, sometimes even to commercial enterprises, instead of recognizing no other career than arms and the Church.

The English, however, had not yet attempted the great voyages beyond the seas which were soon to render their navy so famous. Christopher Columbus had applied to Henry VII., in his efforts to find a sovereign who would entrust a few vessels to him and conquer the New World; but Bartholomew Columbus, brother of the great navigator had been shipwrecked before arriving in England: when he had at length accomplished his mission to King Henry, and had returned to Spain to announce to his brother that he was summoned to London, Isabella the Catholic, had already granted the demands of Columbus, assuring to Castile the riches of the West Indies. The English therefore had no part in the discovery of the New World, and the rumour of the treasures which were found there must more than once have made King Henry VII. pale with jealousy.

The navigators whom he had sent had brought him back neither gold nor silver. John Cabot or Cabotte, of Venetian origin, established at Bristol, and his three sons Lewis, Sebastian and Sanches, had received from King Henry VII., on the 5th of March, 1496, letters patent, authorizing them to sail with five vessels in all seas, in order there to make discoveries and take possession of them in the name of England; the prudent

monarch had reserved for himself one-fifth of the profits of the enterprise; it is to the first voyage of John Cabot and his son Sebastian in 1497 that we owe the discovery of Canada; in the same year, Vasco de Gama doubling the Cape of Good Hope for the first time, in his journey towards India, opened up to commerce a new route by which all the riches of the East were to flow into Europe. Notwithstanding all the overthrows and agitations which the world was yet to suffer, the time of material force, exclusive and brutal, was beginning to pass away; peaceful intelligence and activity saw a vast field of influence and efforts, open up before them.

The Parliament had become the docile instrument of the king, and unresistingly voted all that he was pleased to demand; but the subsidies granted in 1504 excited great murmuring among the people. The king had claimed the feudal gifts in honour of the knighthood conferred upon Prince Henry, and of the marriage of the Princess Margaret; the Commons offered forty thousand pounds sterling, but the king had the moderation to accept only thirty thousand pounds. The malcontents appeared to have found a chief. Edmund de la Pole, second son of the Duke of Suffolk, and brother of the Earl of Lincoln, the protector of Simnel, who had been killed at Stoke, was an embittered and turbulent man. Henry VII. had refused to grant him his paternal inheritance, by alleging that he inherited of his brother and not of his father, and that Lord Lincoln, being declared a traitor, had had his property confiscated; Edmund had therefore been compelled to content himself with a shred of the estates of his family and the title of *Earl* of Suffolk. He had had the misfortune to kill a man in a quarrel: the king, still jealous of all that bore the name of Plantagenet, had taken advantage of this opportunity to accuse him of murder; Suffolk had taken refuge at the court of the Duchess of Burgundy; from thence he hatched plots, it was said. The king caused him to be watched, charged a treacherous emissary to insinuate himself into his confidence, and according to the instructions received by this means, he suddenly caused to be arrested the men upon

whom Suffolk relied most; his brother William de la Pole, Lord Courtenay, who had married one of the daughters of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, Sir James Tyrrel, accused of the murder of Edward V. and the Duke of York in the Tower, and a few other persons were secretly interrogated; Courtenay and De la Pole remained in prison, but Sir James Tyrrel confessed the crime formerly committed upon the young princes by order of Richard III., and he was executed, as well as certain accomplices of the Earl of Suffolk, although the conspiracy of the latter was in no respect proved; the murmurs which he had been accused of encouraging were stifled, and the king, until the end of his life, dispensed henceforth with having recourse to the Parliament; he contented himself with collecting taxes under the name of "benevolences," his coffers overflowed with gold; he passed for the richest monarch of Christendom.

A favourable event happened and secured the vengeance of the king upon the Earl of Suffolk; the bad weather drove upon the coasts of England the Archduke Philip the Fair and his wife Joanna, who had become Queen of Castile by the death of her mother, Isabella the Catholic. The young sovereigns were repairing from Flanders to their new dominions; their counsellors urged them to face the tempest rather than to set foot upon English soil and thus to place themselves in the hands of the skilful Henry VII. Perhaps from curiosity, perhaps from fear, the Archduke insisted upon landing. The King of England appeared to have foreseen all; the illustrious travellers were immediately received with all the honours which were due to them; it was announced to them that the king was coming to meet them. Philip saw that he was caught in the trap, and being in a hurry to put an end to his compulsory visit, he hastened to anticipate Henry VII. The two monarchs met near Windsor, reciprocally lavishing the most touching marks of friendship and confidence. But the wise counsellors of the King of Castile had not been deceived; before the Spanish monarchs were able to take to the sea again Philip had been compelled to consent to deliver up the Earl of Suffolk, who was

living modestly in Flanders; to promise to the King of England the hand of his sister, the Duchess of Savoy, who was a widow and very rich, and finally to affiance his first-born son, who afterwards became the Emperor Charles V., to the little Princess Mary of England. Philip the Fair, after having besides granted great commercial advantages to the English in the Flemish markets, was at length enabled to resume the journey to Spain. Suffolk being enticed to England, was thrown into prison, and one of the last orders which Henry VII. signed was that for his execution.

Before the negotiations for the marriage with the Duchess of Savoy were ended, Philip the Fair had died in Spain, and King Henry cast his eyes upon his widow, whom he supposed to be richer than her sister-in-law. Unfortunately Joanna was insane, hopelessly insane with grief. The health of the King of England grew more and more impaired, and it became evident to all those who approached him that it was time for him to think of death and not of marriage.

Amidst his exactions, of the harshness of which he had given proof, and the perfidy of his intrigues, Henry VII. was a religious prince, preoccupied with the future life and the salvation of his soul; the weakening of his powers warned him to think of his end, and he multiplied his alms; his complaint increasing in 1508, he for the first time lent ear to the cries of his subjects, ruined by the exactions and malversations of Empson and Dudley. The king wished to render justice, he said, and a sincere remorse for all the crimes which he had permitted appeared to have taken possession of his soul; "but Empson and Dudley, although they knew the scruples of the king, continued their practices as furiously as in the past, as though the soul of the king and his money had belonged to different places," says the chronicler. The health of the king had momentarily improved, and his conscience had been somewhat quieted; the treasures which he himself held locked up in his manor of Richmond regained all their charm in his eyes. When in the springtime of 1509, a return of his cough

brought him to the threshold of the tomb, he had time to make his will, recommending his successor to repair the wrong which he had done and to restore that which he had unjustly taken: he then died at Richmond in the night of the 21st of April, 1509, at the age of fifty-two years. He had reigned twenty-three years over a kingdom upset by internal dissensions, impoverished



by wars, and a prey to the most frightful disorders. He had gradually calmed men's passions, repressed or stifled insurrections and conspiracies, favoured commerce and industry; but he had oppressed his subjects to wrest from them the money of which he was greedy. He had lowered the authority of the Parliaments, he had struck severe blows at the great aristocracy, and he had

above all shrouded his policy in so many subterfuges, and pursued his end through so many intrigues and falsehoods, that even time has not been able to throw light upon the truth; the real and only excuse of King Henry VII. is that he belonged to the age of Louis XI., and that he had to treat with Ferdinand of Aragon.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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